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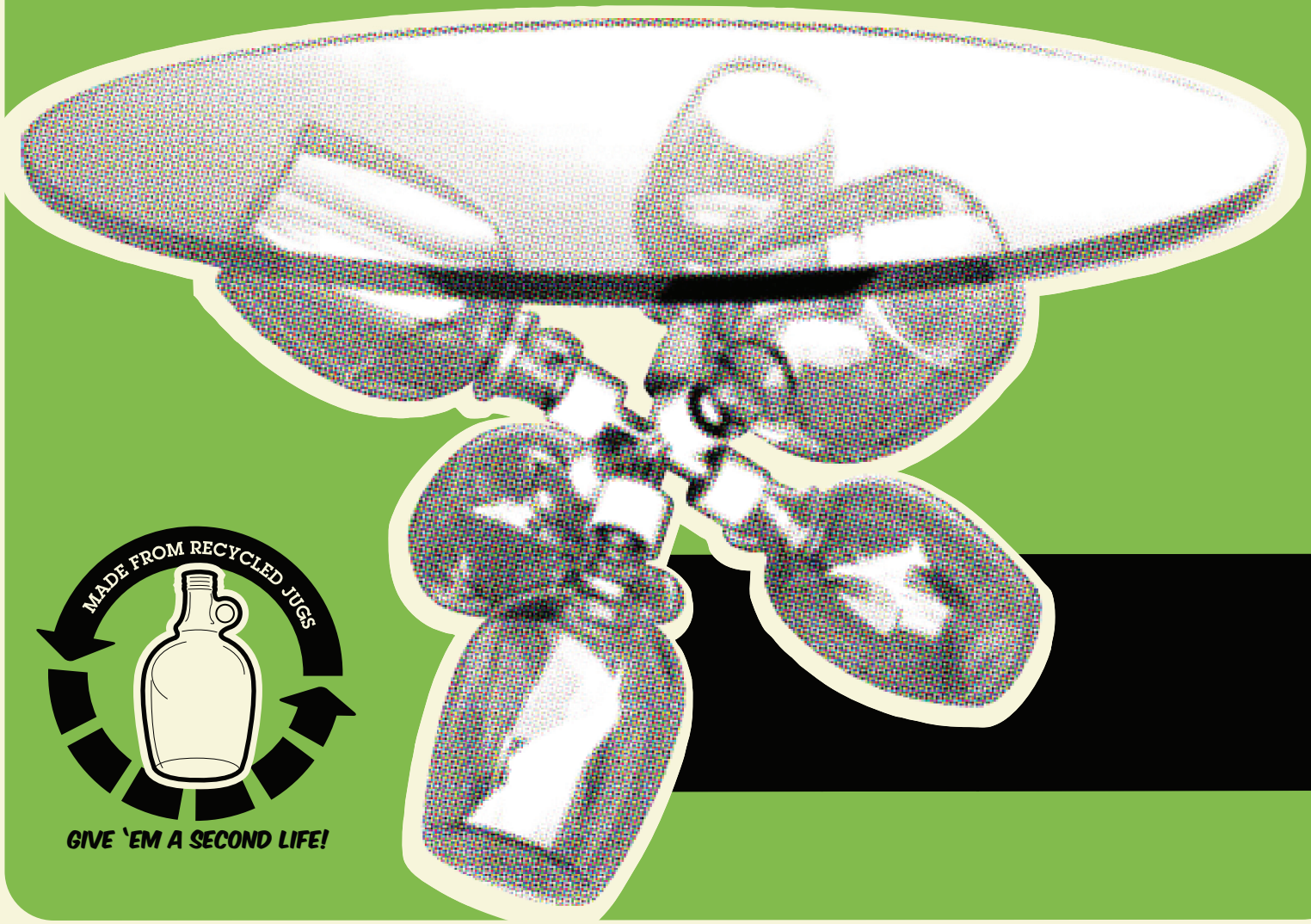

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COSMIC!



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ALWAYS REMEMBER, from a full jug of Carlo Rossi flows great wine. And from an empty jug flows great ideas. Now go make something!

BOOYAH!



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gimme

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ON THE COVER: MIA

PHOTOGRAPHED IN LONDON BY **BROOKE NIPAR.** STYLED BY **CARRI MUNDANE.** SWIMSUIT BY **JUNKO SHIMADA,** JACKET BY **FRUITION,** TIGHTS BY **HUE,** JEWELRY IS STYLIST'S OWN.

ISSUE FIVE


Sean John
CASSIE & LAUREN LONDON



masthead

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PHOTO: JONATHON KAMBOURIS

Guess what? It's our birthday today! YAY! To celebrate Sally, Sam, Brooke, and I just ate our combined body weight in candy, chips, and Jell-O brand flavored gelatin. I think I may hurl. Man, for hot-ass girls with bomb clothes and cute little figures, we sure can body the shit out of a sheet cake. Seriously, we even wore sweatbands like we were training for something. Oooh…are those Cheetos?

Birthdays are fun. And not just cause we get to hoist a 7-foot piñata of a bamboo doorknocker earring from our rafters. They're fun because you get to talk about yourself a lot. Which, well, is sorta like every day (except the Sabbath, GAWD we're not like, heathens), but it's particularly awesome 'cause you get to reflect too. We learned a lot. We learned that gladiator sandals are fug even when rich people wear them. We learned that it isn't nice to date a guy for the month of August expressly 'cause he has a whip, and taking the LIRR to the beach is "for homeless people." And that three days is the longest you can eat the big bag of Doritos for dinner without your stomach staging a revolt. Stupid enticing triangles.

See, we learned tons. We also learned that despite living in abject terror, being broke, and taking some dizzying-ass risks, that when you're doing something you f*cking love it's worth it. We love big. And it's not like "love" on some wantonly-bastardizing-the-world's-greatest-human-emotion shit either. When we love, we mean it. We love *Missbehave*. We fight, cry, self-fellate, and die for this here 100 pages. We love that we're surviving in a scary industry where giants fall. And even when we can see the *Jurassic Park* type aftershocks in our (generous) highballs of Jameson, we know we gotta keep going.

M.I.A. keeps going and she stays getting better, wiser, and faster. That's why she's on our birthday cover. Well, that and the fact that she's hot as f*ck. Would you look at her? From day one, we always knew that Ms. Maya would be on our cover someday. She's got a banger of a second album coming out and she talks for the first time ever about her brief stint as a LA rap video hoe, her moms, and how she's finally wise enough to know better than to try to fit in. That's the strife of being a trailblazer. Sometimes it's lonely work.

We're not lonely though. Mostly 'cause we're popular and people want things from us but ultimately we're not lonely because man, we couldn't do our thing if it weren't for the many spectacularly talented and gracious people that work with us. My UK connect Justin Quirk wrote our brilliantly ignorant guide on how to molest European hotties without getting murdered. Alex Rayner penned the M.I.A. story and got quotes so bananas that the editorial staff was forced to take the rest of the day off to discuss them over margaritas. Ryan Michael Kelly and Robert Greene blessed us, once again, with a video game-inspired beauty story so evisceratingly gorgeous that it left me of all people stumped for words. And Laura "200 pages of transcript" Checkoway straight killed it with her incredible feature on beautiful Asian Ball-Jointed Dolls. They're rad and sorta look like they have murder in their hearts. Mmmm Chucky shredding your jugular… Only a flesh wound.

The jugular is where it's at, man. Protect ya neck but want and love big. Be good to your friends and if you're blessed enough to work with them, try as hard as you can to be even better. My editorial crackerjacks Julie and Olivia know that I love them so I won't wax logorrheic, but these bitches don't even go home anymore. Their roomies have posted their mugs on milk cartons and for that I am grateful (and lactose intolerant). I'm so proud. Mostly 'cause it's a good reflection on me.

And finally to Brooke Nipar, our Photo Editor, and the tall (and smug about it) chica who shot this cover… Girl, you nailed it. Absolutely f*cking nailed it. It's beautiful. We're 1. We rule! Plus, we'll live forever knowing together that we did it all for the glory of love. Word to Peter Cetera.

Chuffed to bits,

Mary H.K. Choi

The Genius Brigade: Jennie Boddy, Michael Glumac, Atoosa, Hardy, Mimi, The Virgins, DelPiano, Nicole V, Sam's mom, Gillian, Queenie, Sara, Little Man, Bacon, Alex, JQ, Hattie, Katie, Maureen, Dust La Rock, Cultist, Chris Pontius, Kelis, Francine, Brian Berman, Scotto and Steak, VOLKS, Pat, Rila, NCB, Rob, and the Bench NYC.

missbehave



JUSTIN QUIRK

Holy Christ do we love Justin Quirk. Like, more than candy, Darwin, and conflict-free diamonds combined. Justin lives in Shoreditch, East London with his long-term girlfriend. He penned our "Holiday Road" feature on banging a bunch of foreigners so as to "write casual xenophobia with a clear conscience." Plus, he felt it was his responsibility as a reformed sex pest to save us from a "sticky end." Justin is the associate editor of *FHM UK*, a contributor to *The Guardian* and *Arena,* and is trying to sell a novel about the porn industry. He's also a DJ at Crackin' Skullz, London's most ignorant rap and soul night, and enjoys bench pressing in his underpants whilst watching documentaries about the world's strongest boy. Englandfortheenglish.blogspot.com



REED + RADER

Reed + Rader killed the artwork and photography for our amazing sportswear story "Electric Company." This collaborative team lives in Brooklyn, and enjoys Nintendo and dressing up their stuffed animals. Pamela Reed is a Scorpio and Matthew Rader is a Taurus, and together their average age is 24. The duo's workout routine consists of running in circles on the roof and drinking caffeine-free Diet Pepsi. That is why they are diesel and mighty. As children, one got ridiculed for their unibrow and the other got their arm sucked up an elephant's nose. Reedandrader.com

CHRIS PONTIUS

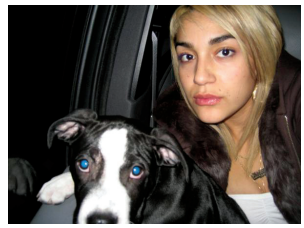
In order to write his feature, 33-year-old Chris Pontius called us at the office a bunch of times. At this we'd giggle like the entire building was made of nitrous. When he submitted his copy the giggling stopped because we were demented with grief that he was married. This is because dude is hysterical and knows a whole lot about vaginas. And even more about what to do when you get arrested. Chris is a member of the *Jackass* crew and a co-host of *Wildboyz*. He is happily married to a beautiful woman named Claire, who we didn't make a voodoo doll effigy of. Not even a little bit. Check out his band at MySpace.com/chrispontiusthebarbarian



VINCENT SKELTIS

30-year-old photographer, Vincent Skeltis shot our "The Way We Were" photo spread based on Jamel Shabazz's book, *A Time Before Crack*. He lives in Brooklyn with his lady and their 2.5-year-old son. Vincent owns a design and creative direction agency called HorsesAndMen. He lost his v-card to his babysitter at the tender age of 12 and his favorite movie is *The Graduate* (hello consistent cougar themes). This Scorpio's first assignment was shooting Jay-Z for the cover of *VIBE* magazine and his favorite comfort food is salad with Judy Bush dressing. This sounds like a euphemism. Vincentskeltis.com





CHRISTINA ZULETA

Christina did up our sick "Disco Ballin'" nails for the issue and was psyched for the opportunity to go "berzerker." This 23-year-old LES dweller is a professional makeup artist and nail technician. She thinks that the grim reaper should join the cast of *The View* and enjoys a Henney pineapple alongside some Colombian empanadas. Her favorite dead celebrity is 2Pac and she loves the Bad Brains. This hot chica also enjoys a good gossip rag and believes her purpose in life is to rock. She would also like to die fast. Which is weird 'cause that way you can't even enjoy it.

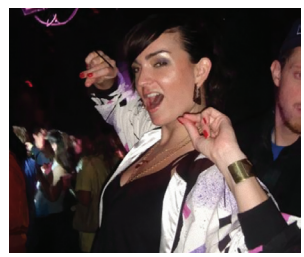


BRIAN BERMAN

Photographer Brian Berman has become a chronic convention crasher (he's been to about 15 in the last two years), so he had few qualms about shooting the doll convention for our awesome story "Welcome to the Dollhouse." 35-year-old Brian lives in the LES and freelances for Ralph Lauren and some European magazines. He's a huge fan of racing his bike against New York buses, cabs, and subway trains in order to work off the occasional Entenmann's raspberry danish twist. He likes floss and if he absolutely had to, would sleep with an American president "to save the galaxy from alien invasion." Brianbermanphoto.com

BROOKE NIPAR

We flew *Missbehave* photo editor and co-founder Brooke Nipar all the way to London to shoot the M.I.A. cover (thanks Interscope!). When she got there, all the natives were suitably dazzled by her glorious beauty and unmatched talent. We love her so much that when she called us from TopShop to gloat, we didn't go to her house in the East Village to destroy her belongings. Her first job was shooting a beauty page for *Jane* Magazine (RIP) and she used to have a lisp (which we totally didn't know about and makes us go, "Aw" and adore her 114 percent more). Brooke loves to dance and has 750 thread-count sheets. Brookenipar.com



ALEX RAYNER

Alex Rayner wrote our M.I.A. cover story and is so brilliant and humble that he makes us feel bad about our egomaniacalness. Alex said the interview was fun because Maya was bright and hot, but that he had trouble bringing out her sadness and vulnerability. We think it's perfect. And wrongness is not our strong suit. 31-year-old Alex lives in London and writes for *the Guardian* and has worked at *Dazed & Confused*, *The Face*, and *Sleaze*. He's contributed to *NME*, *Nylon*, *Fader*, and British *GQ*. Oh, and he edits stateofplayzine.com, a political magazine for sedentary seditionaries. Alexrayner.com




STUSSY





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The Diggers Society is **Digital Gravel**'s t-shirt of the month club featuring exclusive designs from streetwear's premium independent brands. These designs will only ever be available to members of The Diggers Society. To join, please log on to http://www.digitalgravel.com . Can you dig it?

AS SEEN ON DG

A.D.H.D

22 REASONS

We Can't Sit Still!



WORD!

Will Shortz, 55, the puzzle editor at the *Times*, totally tickles my fancy. Each morning that I open the *NYT*, I'm spellbound by the checkerboard of confusion that awaits the tip of my quivering no. 2 pencil. Bill Clinton does them shits in pen. How diesel is that? Not only is WILLz (as he's called by his crossword cronies) brilliant, but he grew up on an Arabian Horse farm. I bet he knows the Piebald. This Wizard of wordsmithery has been conjuring conundrums for over 20 years and he's the only person in the world to hold a degree in Enigmatology, the study of puzzles. WILLz has been serving up a daily dose of syllables since he became Crossword Puzzle Editor in 1993 and he was awesome in that movie *Wordplay*. He also has a Tudor house filled with Arts and Crafts furniture, but Shortz needs to come over to my house so I can get Kathy Bates circa *Misery* on that ass. I AM your number one fan. After publishing a boatload of crossword books, he's bridged the gap to Sudoku and is making a killing... gotta love number geeks, they'll buy anything. Test your skillz against WILLz (ha!) at nytimes.com/pages/crosswords—*Julie Davis*

CTRL FREAK

Like any truly admirable designer, Tomi Freeman started a clothing line to bag more girls. "It's one of the best ways to get ladies' attention," says the founder/designer of CTRL, a Helsinki, Finland-based brand whose fall '07 line includes a sick black and purple piano hoodie you'd maim for.

Freeman launched the skate-inspired line in 1995. Back then, CTRL (pronounced C-T-R-L) was for boys only—peddling T-shirts, hoodies, and boards. In 2003, the four-person crew rightfully decided that CTRL should go coed. Now more of a hybrid between skate brand and fashion label, CTRL includes everything from pants to outerwear. "In Finland, we've got a long winter, so we're specialized in designing good winter clothing."

CTRL plans to take over the world one city at a time—starting with New York, and then Stockholm. "We have no intentions of staying a cool, small brand," says Freeman, who worked at the Swedish store, zoovillage.com, before CTRL. "Instead, we want to be cool and huge." Good. Chicks dig huge.—*Jessica Jones*



SUGAR ME PRETTY



Bedazzle my heart and glitter my eyes, for I am a child of the night! Drama, jazz hands, and cut! *Missbehave* believes that glitz and glamour never go out of style, so when Sugar told us they were flipping for glitter this season, we knew we had to get their "Glam Your Eyes Out" series. Sugar makes everything you need to get a gorgeous set of peepers. Knock yourself out and knock his socks off! Available this fall at sephora.com and ulta.com. Spirit fingers not included.

—*Lil Sadie*

SUGAR PHOTO: MARLEY RIZZUTI



OLIVIA COSIGNS SHORTCOMINGS



I LUH Adrian Tomine's depressingly realistic new graphic novel. It's about a whiny, nerdy, Japanese dude who tries to hook up with white chicks. His lesbian friend rails on him with biting racial remarks, which is so exactly what I'd do. 'Cause I'm supportive.

LOCHER'S



Nicole, Lindsay, and Paris—listen up, 'cause we're talking to you: Why get knocked up by the mother of all douchebags, snag your bajillionth DUI, or cry your way through a sentence? Instead, try rocking a shirt that says "I hate children," "I like it rough," or "life is f*cked up," and come out looking as wholesome as Mandy Moore. A line of knit tops from Parisian fashion label Locher's lets you do just that. By merging goody-two-shoe femininity—think embroidered flowers, ribbons, and cross-stitch lettering, with hard-knock messages (our favorite: "no time to f*ck"), Locher's coyly gives Hollywood's hottest skanks a run for their money.—*Erika Stalder*



WANNA BATTLE?

OXY COTTONTAIL AND JUSTINE D. SHARE THEIR FINEST SLEPT-ON DATE SPOTS



If you're going to live in a city like New York, you must know the best date spots to hit for every occasion. Besides, any self-respecting city girl should be obsessed with the dope and diverse food options in her cosmopolitan turf. Sushi, champagne, grapefruit marshmallows, and a night ride on a Parisian's motorcycle—Oxy and Justine divulge their favorite sexy secret date locations.

BEST SPOT FOR A FUN DATE

Oxy: **American Museum of Natural History**

Central Park West @ 79th St. amnh.org

To me, this is the ultimate date spot. Get your learn on while strolling the miles of this amazingly HUGE museum next to Central Park. The dioramas are kitschy in some places and lifelike in others. Pay extra ($22 or $16.50 w/ Student ID) for an IMAX movie. Hold hands with your beau and squeeze him tight at the exciting parts of the movie about spelunking or galaxies. Plus, if it's a first date and he turns out to be wack, you can easily lose him in this enormous museum and explore on your own.

Justine: **Chinatown Fair Arcade**

8 Mott St. @ Worth St.

Chinatown fair has been around since I was a kid, so we're talking a LONG time here. It's dark, loud, and boisterous. Filled with pre-teen Asian wannabe gangsters and the expected glut of video game nerds, you can't help but get excited and feel like a kid again. You and your date can reminisce over games like Ms. Pacman and Galaga or get an aerobic workout with Dance Dance Revolution. Being in such a happy and competitive atmosphere usually heightens the pheromones, so don't be surprised if a ravenous make-out session ensues.

BEST ROMANTIC LIGHTING

Oxy: **Turkish Kitchen**

386 3rd Ave. @ 27th St. turkishkitchen.com

Mediterranean fare at it's finest. Reasonably priced 4 course meals for dinner and a simple but delicious wine list. The whipped caviar w/ olive oil, called Tarama Salatasi, is my favorite. The bread is insane too (but don't eat too much or you'll get full before you can gorge on the main course). The dark lighting and red walls will make you feel like you're in the center of his heart.

Justine: **Jewel Bako**

239 E. 5th St. @ 2nd Ave.

Owned by husband and wife team Jack and Grace Lamb, it's a favorite with the sushi elite of NY. A sleek interior could be seen as snobbish, but Jack and his staff are friendly and delightfully witty. They're also sticklers for refinement and the tiniest details, like repositioning your chopsticks for you when you use the bathroom. The Chef's Omakase is highly recommended and if you're a regular, your meal always begins with a champagne toast, compliments of Jack. Gaze into each other's eyes, breaking only long enough to devour yummy sashimi.

CHEAP SPOT FOR A HIPSTER...

Oxy: **Mamoun's Falafel**

119 MacDougal @ W 3rd St. mamounsfalafel.com

Ride through SoHo on bikes with your favorite skinny jean clad boy and grab a $2 falafel sandwich from Mamoun's. Then hit up the West Side via bicycle to watch the sunset. He will praise you for your falafel-hunting skills and healthy habits. Bike up to Time Square to make fun of tourists, then come back down to SoHo for another Mamoun's Falafel. He'll be satisfied and sweaty.

Justine: **Lemon Ice King of Corona**

52-02 108th St. @ Corona Ave. (Queens)

If you can dupe your Hipster into actually leaving Manhattan, you'll find some of the cheapest and best deals in the outer boroughs of New York.



CULTIST

Missbehave columnist Yasi Salek is not only brilliantly articulate, fetchingly skinny, but she's also mega entrepreneurial. Her online store, Cultist is a testament to her intimidating business acumen, flawless taste, and incomparable eye for all that is rad in street and sportswear. Their sophisticated, calligraphic "C" logo, designed by artist and business partner Robin Walker, is totally something worthy of tattooing on your neck. You know, if your name was like Charlene or something. cultistshop.com—*Julie Davis*

STÜSSY X HYDE S.K.



Get your astral projection on with the new "spirited" Hyde S.K. and Stüssy collaboration! Sacha Knight, The beauty and brains behind Hyde S.K., gets her inspiration from Native American culture, particularly Shamanism. And she's keen on lighthearted stuff like skulls, Vietnamese camouflage, gothic art, Hell's Angels, pirates, the occult, nature, and old buildings. Through the use of tiny spider web designs, her collection of hoodie, wallet, and handbags allude to her netherworldy interests. Start your fall off right with the deep dreamy colors that make the Hyde SK Stüssy collabo your Autumnal fashion psychopomp.—*J. D.*



MISS WAX

Miss Wax is a one of kind jewelry line straight outta So-Cal. When head designer/founder, Kylee Fauss, ain't too busy bopping her beach blonde dome piece to Bowie, or serving up Falafel to famished San Diegoans, she's painting and glazing each accessory. She handcrafts these bad boys with love. And maybe even a little carpal tunnel. Each painstaking piece represents a different concept, from New York Subway maps to boom boxes and roller skates. Get your ears waxed at misswax.com—*J. D.*

Bike all the way to Queens together...I know, I know, it all sounds really ambitious, but biking is one of the best ways to see the city. Make your way to the legendary Lemon Ice King of Corona. It's in an old-school Italian neighborhood bursting with authentic and eccentric personalities. Grab a peanut butter ice (my favorite) and enjoy watching the senior citizens play bocce ball in a well-kept court right across the street.

BEST SPOT TO MILK HIM FOR AN XXX-PENSIVE MEAL

Oxy: **Megu**

62 Thomas St. @ West B'way megunyc.com

Megu is my favorite Japanese restaurant in the city! I can't stress the importance of eating here at least once in your life. The Kobe Beef is insane and melts in your mouth. To call the Kobe Beef at Megu a "dish" is absurd. "Kobe Beef Grilled on a River Stone" has incredible presentation and is served on a hot red rock. You cook the meat yourself then dip it into three different sauces. Yum! The "Premium Kobe Steak, Kagerou Yaki" is has flaming Henney poured over top. The bill can be $500-1,000 depending on how much meat you can eat, so starve up before you go.

Justine: **Jean Georges**

1 Central Park West @ Columbus Circle

jean-georges.com

While I always say it's not nice to use people, if you absolutely must, head uptown to Jean Georges. A four star French restaurant, the overall mood is well...UPSCALE. I always recommend the Tasting Menu—seven courses of rich and decadent dishes ranging from foie gras to scallops with caramelized cauliflower. The highlight for me is always dessert. Choose from four dessert tastings, among them citrus and chocolate. Afterwards, treat yourself with their homemade marshmallows infused with vanilla, coffee and grapefruit. At $125 per person the Tasting Menu is definitely a steal, but watch out for champagne and wine, beverages can easily bring the entire meal over the $500 mark. Be sure to dress appropriately for such an elegant setting.

NON-NYC HONORABLE MENTION...

Oxy: **PARIS, Meilleur Des Mondes**

4 bis rue Michel Chasles, 75012, Paris

meilleurdesmondes.com

This internet/cyber cafe, by Gare De Lyon Metro off of Diderot Boulevard, is the place to meet my favorite man of mystery. Wear some type of NYC shirt and flirt with the owner, kick up your NYC accent if need be. He's missing a finger on his right hand and loves Americans. Sooner rather than later, he'll offer you a motorcycle ride around Paris at night! You'll see the city in such an intimate way and be dazzled by all the lights. Trust me, your life will be changed forever.

NON-NYC NON HONORABLE MENTION...

Justine: **The Eiffel Tower**

*1 You Can't F*cking Miss It Blvd.*

Ugh, who would have thought one of the world's most breathtaking monuments could be so truly unromantic? The miles and miles of lines and sardined tourists will drive even the most lovey-dovey newlyweds straight into a heated argument about nothing. It's best to admire the great tower from afar. Don't waste the 11.50 Euros (per person), instead grab some wine and delicious French carbs and hop on one of the nostalgic, ornate carousels at the base of the structure.

DILF HUNTER JOHNNY DEPP



It's official: God is smiting me. I know He's "busy," and may not have time to single me out to cast down a petty vendetta of this ferociousness, but why else would He plant Johnny Depp in the one country I'm loathe to visit? France is teeming with French people. Ugh. Were it not, I'd snap up the farmhouse adjacent to Johnny's *toute de suite*. We'd sip snifters of Pastis, play a rousing round of boules, and after some zesty mid-afternoon nook nuzzling, he'd come into my Viper Room. Après romp, he'd idly pull leaves out of my matted hair and rue ever having balled that galling Gaul Vanessa Paradis. Who, I'm appalled to admit, is very hot. If former models with enormous eyes and chasmal clavicles are your thing.

Prior to Kate Moss, well before "Winona Forever," I loved Johnny Depp. I was 12, he was 29 and upon watching that fateful *21 Jump Street* rerun, I knew with conviction that if I couldn't dry hump that dishy, volatile undercover High Schooler, and get a little over-the-shirt booby action, that I would die. I'd get so jail bait on that ass. Unfortunately, I didn't die. *Edward Scissorhands* only prolonged my suffering. Even with a deformity that would grant him exceptional parking spaces in malls and supermarkets, and despite finger banging being out of the question (for risk of infection), the ever-present hazard of laceration would make for penetrating repartee. "Scissor me," I'd demand, cleaving his legs with mine. And then, in case he was partial to the sweet stanzas of Southern rap, I'd suggest he "cut me up like I ain't been cut." Then, and only then, would my greedy gash be pacified.

But even as charmingly unmarred as his alabaster skin and ethnically ambiguous obsidian locks were in his twenties and thirties, jejune Johnny is simply no match for DILF (Dad I'd Like to F*ck) Johnny. At 44, there is an ease about him. No more buggerings administered with pneumatic nether-numbing roteness—all staccato, no crescendo. Daddy Depp is different. Leisurely-paced, calloused vascular hands, precise complete strokes. Even his foppish turns as Captain Jack Sparrow—limp wrists, long hair and faggy kohl-lined eyes—do nothing to dissuade me. I will go to France. I will defile the Francophile. I will capture him. And I'll use mayonnaised freedom fries as bait.—*Mary H.K. Choi*

FILM SCHOOL KAMIKAZE GIRLS



Title: *Shimotsuma Monogatari* or *Kamikaze Girls* (US release)
Director: Tetsuya Nakashima
Year: 2004

The Pitch: *Kamikaze Girls* is a luridly-colored confection shot up with just enough grit, heart, and humor to prevent it from descending into ever-irritating preciousness. The flick oozes kitsch to undreamt levels and packs a punch like a pastel pink lollipop and pop-culture potpourri knuckle sandwich. OMG!

Why you should catch it: Meet Momoko, a 'Lolita' and an outlandish brew of prepubescent suckling vamp, (Wednesday Addams crossed with a French maid). Clad in pristine frilly Bo Peep dresses, she dreams of getting to Harajuku—that metropolitan shopping wonderland we all know and love. Unfortunately, Momoko's way out in the boonies and a ticket costs a hefty yen. Her petty criminal father scammed his way across the continent, hawking fake Versace handbags and is hiding out from the Yakuza—deep in bumblef*ck. Stuck amongst the cow shit and paddy fields of rural Ibaraki Prefecture, she yearns for adventure and to live like French aristocracy.

Ichiko is a proud 'Yanki' (fashionable gangster gal) and member of fierce she-biker pack, The Ponytails. She sports wild blonde tresses, an Elvis lip snarl, and some mean black eyeliner as she sits atop her amazingly rad, tricked-out moped. A real tough cookie, and beautiful as all get out, Ichiko's arrival in Ibaraki guarantees that Momoko's life is about to change forever. Wanting to emblazon her gang jacket as a gift to her leader, Ichiko needs to get to Harajuku to seek a legendary embroiderer to teach her the ways. With a common destination, this unlikely duo journeys through dangerous back-alley pachinko parlors, chic fashion boutiques, and ratty bike-punk infested hoods for their ultimate pursuits. The hijinks that follow must be seen to be believed—Ichiko gets ambushed by rival gangs and while she's getting a royal pummeling, along scoots Momoko to save the day and kick some ass. Not without her own near death experience—slamming face first into a delivery truck of cabbages.

Will these lovely ladies, on opposite sides of the Japanese Cosplay fashion spectrum reach the heavenly gates of Harajuku? Can Momoko's father escape da hood life and avoid bootleg market martyrdom? Does our badass heroine finally break through the underground fashion world as a full-fledged seamstress? And, what the hell's up with that suave pachinko playin' stud with the unicorn coiffure? We likey.

Kamikaze Girls is available at www.viz.com, with tons of extras and a super-cool reproduction of the original short novel by Novala Takemoto.
—*Larry Conti*




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Photographer: www.edelkelly.com

KELIS ON...



Hoes & Housewives

On a lazy Sunday I was flipping through the channels and stopped on Discovery. I was watching what I thought was a show about some cattle herder in Africa. He was talking to his family, friends, and elders about being short something like 70 cows. I kept thinking, 'Wow this is intense. This guy needs more cows.' Then a baby-faced beauty came into frame and it was all clear. The young man was short on cows for his dowry to marry this woman. Her parents and elders wanted to make sure he would care and provide for her, so the young man was doing whatever it took. I guess he doesn't listen to "Gold Digger" on the radio

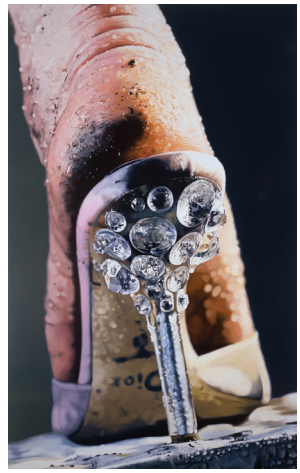
I started to think about other cultures like India and the caste system. A man's social status and finances are scrutinized when being considered for an arranged marriage. In European history, matrimoney combined wealth and land, made heirs, and started and stopped wars. For centuries, people around the world have married for power, wealth, and convenience. It was a transaction of resources, in some instances love came after.

An author named Leslie Bennetts wrote a book titled *The Feminine Mistake.* It's about educated career women "giving up" their "lives" to raise families and keep households. I think the phenomenon is interesting. If we expect financial security from our husbands, is it then acceptable as wives to lose our selves in marriage and family? Can a woman actually have it all, or is that fighting against a predestined natural imperative?

I hear women, real working women, who are smart and great say there are no good men left. In many instances decent, successful men have made their beds and now have to lie in them (usually with some hoe). Successful women, who aren't necessarily willing to be strictly a hoe or a housewife, are being lost in the shuffle, while (admittedly quite skilled) strippers are clapping their asses for ballers or posers who make it rain with a few singles.

Listen, power to the hoe. She can have all those guys for all I care. They aren't our concern. But pushing all skanks and groupies aside, can a real man tell the difference between a hoe and a good woman? Does he know what to look for? Does he even care to see a difference? And conversely, is it reasonable for a woman to only want a man who's got his cows together? I mean, it *is* dictated by history that she has the right to expect that from her man.

I'm a forward-thinking modern female. I've posed a bunch of questions, so here's my take—leave the gold digging for the chickens and birds. Expect more than money, ladies. A man and woman should be partners. In business, partners play different roles equally important to the success of that business. Life and marriage are no different. So for all the jaded negroes Kanye spoke for, I suggest you make a T-shirt. Maybe the slogan could read something like: "Dig This: I Got Your Gold Right Here!"





MARILYN MINTER

SOILED BEAUTY



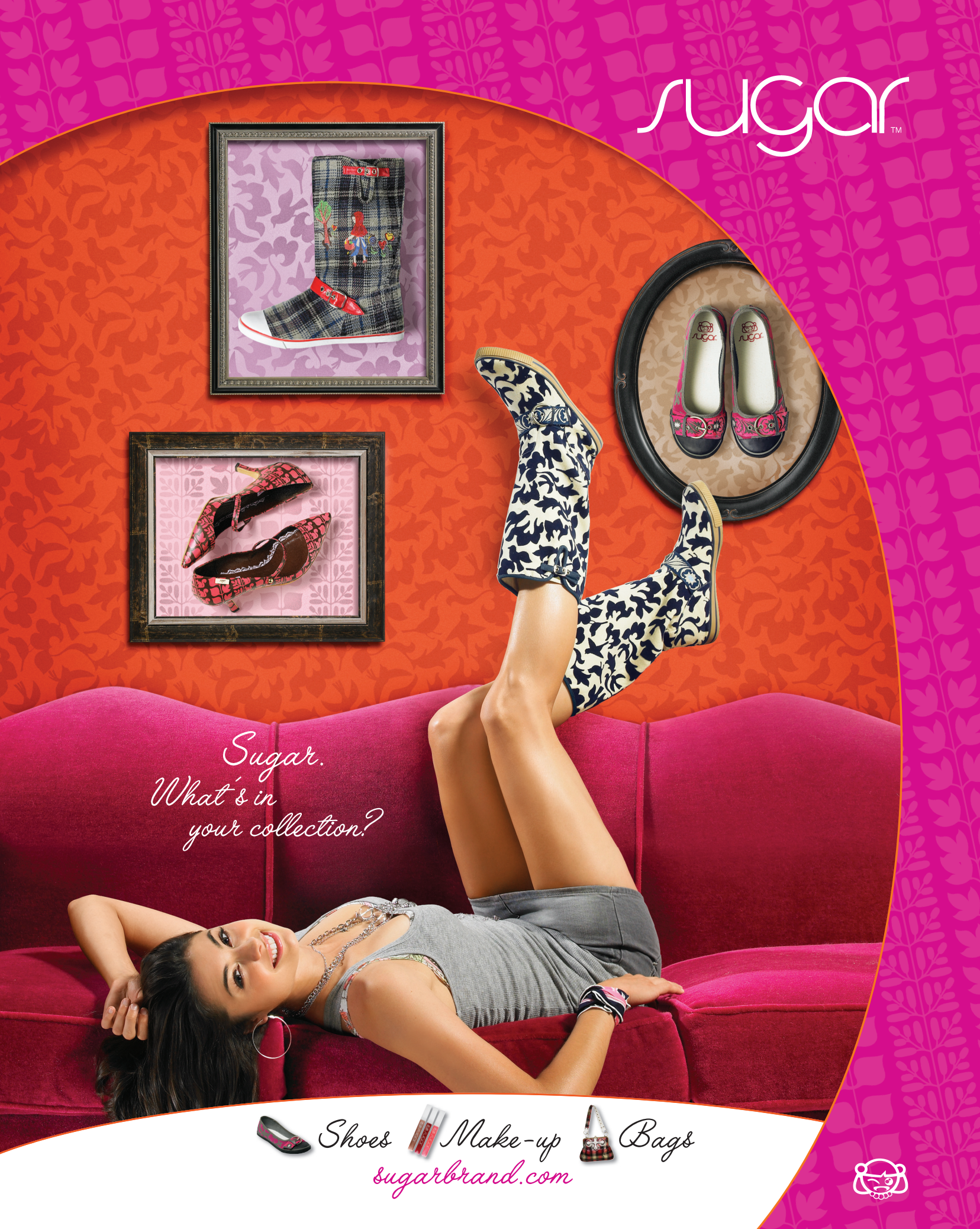
I've had a hard-on for Marilyn Minter for a minute, and she's been alarming critics for like 30 years. Artsy types recognize her for her Whitney Biennial and fat billboards in Chelsea. Her eponymous coffee-table book published by Gregory R. Miller & Co., catalogs some of her dopest work, including the never before seen studies of her narcissistic drug-addict mother, corncob hand job paintings from her "100 Food Porn" series, and her recent work of mad expensive shoes on filthy muddied ankles. Candid interviews with 59-year-old Minter describe everything from smut shopping, "we looked like aging porn stars," to her fetish for imperfections, "making a picture of that constant failure"—she highlights the unsightly details and eroticizes them. She seized XXX images and brought into sharp focus the grit, dirt, cum, sweat, and hair. A self described "photo-replacer", Minter creates hyperreal paintings inspired by found images, beauty ads, cooking shows, and her own photography. Her massive, runny, enamel-on-metal paintings zoom-in on everyday objects rendering them messily abstract yet undeniably sexy. Am I turned on by a dripping drag queen's armpit? Um, duh.—*Olivia Allin*



SAMANTHA COSIGNS

THE MASTER CLEANSE TINI

Sarma, founder of the raw food restaurant Pure Food and Wine, invented one of the best drinks I've ever had—the Master Cleanse Tini. This subtly sweet cocktail is a sake-based spoof on the infamous Master Cleanse. Complete with a Cayenne pepper rim. Yum!


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Get at me!!! The Remix





Holy merciful Lord, what an amazing summer this has been. My friends and I redefined the art of hanging out with The Bench (check myspace.com/thebenchnyc), I finally made it to Passa Passa in Kingston, Jamaica (Google it), I was named the head of Sony Music, had my private jet shuttle me off to D.C. where I testified before Congress against music piracy, I became a certified diver, and I learned how to sketch watches for Harry Winston. But through all of this, I also met, observed and dodged the advances of many beautiful young ladies. For the most part, their efforts were valiant and I applaud them for their choices of brilliantly colored '80s and '90s b-girl apparel. It's not necessarily my look of choice for a broad but I give you gals an A for effort. F*ck, I didn't even know they still made fat dookie rope chains, but somehow ALL OF YOU managed to find and purchase them. Cheers! Anyway, in summation, all of your boyfriends suck and if you keep reading my column and following some of my tips, maybe, just maybe, someday you'll be able to score a class act like myself.



Please feel me and follow these instructions very carefully....

Have a normal living situation—Don't live with 15 roommates, your parents, your ex-boyfriend, some dude you occasionally bang, your gay, your cokehead co-worker, lesbians, sorority sisters, a salsa band, your fiancé, an NBA team, Bob Dole, the Girl Scouts of America (wait, actually, it's cool if you live with them), The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, white supremacists, Liev Schreiber, skateboarders, a fencing team, vegans, republicans, a blimp pilot, Scientologists, the American Heart Association, or your three kids.

High Waist Not—Yo. High-waisted pants... F*CKING HORRIBLE! Trust me and twenty of my male friends, this looks good on NO ONE. It is in NO WAY flattering or sexy. This must stop immediately. For serious!

Like T-Pain—"Buy You a Drank" is my shit. That and "I'm a Flirt" by R. Kelly are in the running for Song of the Summer.

LOVE R. Kelly—The king of R&B. Actually, he put the R in R&B. He's black, handsome, he sings, plus he's rich..."Trapped in the Closet." "Sex in the Kitchen." "Bump N' Grind." "Ignition (Remix)" All genius. He puts the pee in pop music.

No Blow—This is a disgusting habit. I'm not down with this at all. Not a good look ladies. Sweaty, edgy, and clenched is not cool. The whole ritual of doing blow is mad lame. No guy wants to marry up a coke fiend broad. I know the '80s are back but we have to draw the line (ha!) somewhere. I don't sniff coke 'cause it'll make me choke! Pass the kushumpeng and the good champagne.

Yosh—These fragrances are DUMB expensive and crazy hard to find but trust me when I say that you'll thank me for putting you up on this.

Rock Roger Vivier—If you got a mean shoe game, then you mess with Louboutin but if you have the mad, sick, head nuh good shoe game, then you're up on Roger Vivier. The boutique in Paris is ridiculous but they just opened a shop in NYC on Madison Avenue. And yo... it's pronounced Roe-zsherr. Think of the Zsa Zsa Gabor sound. That's how you say it kids. Don't sleep.

Ladies, hit me now at matt@theclasstrip.com or myspace.com/mattgoias!



INTERVENTION

ZACH BRAFF



Zach, bro, we've harbored a crush on you since the first episode of *Scrubs*. Your endearing portrayal of loveable schmo JD was rad. You and Donald Faison being gay for each other was extra exciting 'cause it was homo *and* interracial. But the thing is, when you're anyone other than JD, we get skeevechills real bad. There's something so gross and wrong about it. Watching your earnest *Garden State* performance was like seeing a rat eat another rat. And that other movie with Rachel Bilson where you're married and waffling? We'd rather watch old people make out with tongue.

Just let us pigeonhole you. Please? You just don't make sense anywhere else and we don't buy into your sensitive emo guy schtick. We get how TV works. JD is make-believe. Which explains the unmistakably churlish and cheese-dickish quality of you, Zach Braff. Apples. Oranges. Thing is, (and we never imagined we'd say this) you need to be more like a Jeremy Piven-type. Be true to your inner date rapist. We'll tie a little bell around your neck so we know when you're coming. We detest inconsistencies. You claim you're a sweet guy, yet you've got so many blondes on your arm that it's as if you're attempting to breed a new strain of syphilis. That's not sweet, it's caustic. And that is why it burns when you pee maybe.

Zach, we like you in snippets, we're still huge *Scrubs* fans. Even if your face in high def is like that one part in *RoboCop* where the guy's melting and swollen from toxic waste. But you really need to stop blogging about your new dog. The puppy pussy ploy is played. But kudos for the entry, "I'm kind of like a 12-year-old trapped in a 32-year-old's body." That's the first honest thing you've said. It's only right to warn potential dates that your body's past its prime and your mind wants to play video games, get erections for no reason, and see what puppies will do for a little peanut butter.—*Evadne Umbers*



Offer for two $10 Gift Certificates good toward any Natural American Spirit products of greater value. Offer restricted to U.S. smokers 21 years of age or older. Limit one offer per person per 12 month period. Offer void in MA and where prohibited. Other restrictions may apply. Offer expires 12/31/07.

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COLOR BLOCK GROCERY TOTES

Mother Earth is a nice lady even though she's hella old and smells like cow farts so stop hatin' on her when you go shopping. Reusable, color block, grocery totes by Susan Bijl offer a multicolored alternative to paper or plastic bags. Plus they're way less shit-eating and eyeroll-trendy than those "I am not a Plastic Bag" Anya Hindmarch jump offs. And even if you're one of those weirdos who hate the environment (psycho), these totes come in so many colors you'll be sure to outshine other shoppers who lug their produce in drab disposable joints. The nylon totes are water-repellent and roomy enough to carry produce, an endangered species or two, and your talking Al Gore doll. Available online at Fredflare.com—*Joanna Borns*



Leah Rose is the music editor of *XXL* magazine and the co-host of "Lip Service," a talk show on Shade45, that airs every Monday from 8:00-10:00PM EST. She's also mean as gangrene on the made-up word scene. This issue's installment is...

Verbal DiaLeah

Radicool (rad-i-cool) *adjective*. When something is so f*ckin' bomb it stretches way past just radical.

Usage: "Dude, I'm so awesomer than you now. I just bought a Snoopy snowcone machine on eBay. I totally forgot how radicool they are."

BOYS DIG DIRTY LAUNDRY

YASI TRIES... SELLING HER PANTIES FOR PROFIT



I'm broke. Perusing-the-Craigslist-"Services"-section-broke. In my on-going quest to shame my mother, for this installment of Yasi tries...I am selling undergarments. On Craigslist. And not new ones either. Research on pricing scales conclude that $30 is the going rate for "worn one day" and $55 for "worn during time of month." As this is an vital issue, worthy of deliberation and some polling, I consult some male friends for buyer input. I ask them what kind of girl's underpants would fetch the most at auction. After the obligatory "ew" or "What are you talking about? You're crazy," most shooed me away except for one wise soul. His name is Jupiter and the coolness of his response merits a name drop. This way his parents can be as mortified as mine. Without skipping a beat, he rattled off the characteristics he would want in his online panty purveyor. "Any girl who wears J.Crew and listens to rap music to piss off her preppy friends. Wears glasses in bed. Likes penny loafers. Pearl earrings. Lacrosse. And no tatts." Always have a sexual deviant on speed-dial. Jointly we created this ad:

> Hi! My name is Julie, I'm 18 years old and I just moved to Los Angeles from Connecticut for college. A friend of mine made a lot of money doing this, and with tuition and books and all I could use it, so here I am. I'm 5'6" and blonde with green eyes. I like to jog and play lacrosse so I'm pretty fit. I have several pairs of freshly worn panties for sale... 1 pair flower print boy shorts, worn to a frat party then to a sleepover with the girls, 1 pair of blue boy shorts worn to workout at the gym, 1 pair lacy thong panties, worn at home in bed while I thought about my boyfriend back home...
> Each pair is $35 plus shipping. Please contact me if you're interested.
> xo,
> Julie

I slapped Julie on Craigslist and sat back to wait for the money to roll in. After about 6 hours I began to grow panicky. What if no one responds? Am I being rejected? Are my panties not worthy? After a sleepless night riddled with nightmares of middle school gym class (don't ask) I awoke to find this in my new julieluv99@gmail inbox:

> Hi Julie,
> You sound really great and nice. I would love to buy your panties. Are you up for meeting and wearing those panties for me? I was thinking of meeting at a public place, you'll be wearing the panties and flash me a couple of times. Then you would go change out of them and give them to me nice and fresh. -R

While I was pleased to finally be "picked," my dedication to my journalistic endeavors does not stretch to being raped/murdered in an alley behind a grocery store by some dude. Next.

> please call 818-219-2### george

I tried to call George but laughed so hard I kept having to hang up. Next.

> Dear Julie,
> I have just come across your post on CL, Im interested in buying from you, from your list in the posting, if there are any left. If you have more pairs to sell, email me back and let me know. Do you provide special requests in your panties? For a higher price of course. Thanks, RJ

I was intrigued by RJ's preposition. "Special requests IN my panties?" Not on, not for, but IN. I respond to his email a day later (Advice from mom; always make them wait for it).

> Hey RJ,
> Thanks for your email! What do you mean by special requests? Like what kind?
> Julie

Pervy friends notwithstanding, I can't say I was entirely prepared for RJ's response.

> If I may, my favorite special request is pee. If there was a chance that you could provide that request, that would be very appreciated, Thanks, RJ

At least he was polite. What I still wasn't entirely sure about was the...well, the level of saturation, so to speak. However one more email cleared that right up.

> Anything cotton works for me actually, any style and if it's alright with you....could you completely soak the pair that I buy?

Ever the gentleman, that RJ. But I wasn't completely soaking nothin' til I got my moneys. A few days later Julie's first PayPal email appeared (my "higher price" was fifty smackers) and I set about fulfilling my end of the transaction. Let's just say three Ziploc freezer bags and one rather awkward trip to the UPS store later, I was officially an entrepreneur. As I spent the fruits of my labor on whiskey, I imagined myself as the CEO of a panty-producing company, with plenty of outsourced "labor." Then I imagined myself at home watching *CSI,* eating orange chicken flanked by eight cats. Don't worry Mom, I'm sticking to my day job.

GROCERY TOTE PHOTO: MARLEY RIZZUTI

WTF? VORTEX VIBRATIONS

Call me crazy, but when I think vacuum cleaner, I don't think vagina. In fact, when I hear "vacuum," what pops into my germaphobic mind are the parasites, dead skin, fleas, lice, trace feces particles, and mold that are picked up by the apparatus. Vacuums suck up crumbs and pet hair, but the porous dust bags also spew out clouds of parasite-infested matter. They can't help it. Just as I can't help wearing a thick twill onesie with gloves when cleaning with one. But whatever, I'm a little particular.

The folks at Exciting Products Inc. would disagree with me. Mostly 'cause their standards in hygiene are way suspect. Probably 'cause they're Canadian. They designed Vortex Vibrations, a patent pending, suction vibrator that utilizes the power of a household vacuum, to create a wind tunnel that makes "the clitoris vibrate and flutter like the reed in a saxophone." Saliva-drenched sax reeds? Mmmm...bacterial block party.



Vortex Vibrations include two attachments, the "Introducer" and the "Seducer." Both are plastic, tubular, and kinda look like the weird doodads that come with your vacuum to clear cobwebs from neglected cornices or suck up crumbs from couch crannies—only they're My Little Pony purple and have a ring of plastic around them that you manipulate for suction. The Seducer sucks less and provides more vibration, for a supposedly faster, more intense nut. The Introducer provides more suction and less vibration, for a longer "rolling" climax. Sounds promising until I realize I have to first schlep my Dirt Devil out of the closet, affix it to my pristine P, and vigorously stroke the plastic ring on the attachment like so much uncut foreskin. Barf.

I mean basically, you couldn't pay me to attempt something like this, but luckily I'm a lowly editorial assistant, who can get bullied into such situations without even the slightest promise of money. Damn. This is what I can say about the test run: It's really gross and really time consuming. I had to empty out the dust bag and wash my hands twice. It does tickle but when you pull the ring too close to you, really bad stuff happens. Like mutilation bad stuff. There were clouds of dust swirling, some coughing, and the knowledge that there's nothing more demoralizing, to a chick with OCD, than the soul-killing whir of a filthy vacuum attending to her already way clean nan. There was no "fluttering" and I'm so not putting this on my resumé.—*Julie Davis*





SOCK DREAMS

Seamlessly bridging the gap between a porn star boutique and a store where Hello Kitty might buy her leggings, sockdreams.com has got to be the best foot, knee, and lace fetish, soft porn site I've ever seen. Plus, it really does sell just about anything you'd need to swathe your gams in.

Although the typical pervy male in me still favors thigh highs, knee highs, bows, fishnets, and anything schoolgirlish, the tantalizing photos of coyly positioned, twiggy-esque, knobby-kneed, cross-legged, waify, faceless models have me ready to buy just about any pair of socks on this goddamn site—even those ridiculous toetoe things I despise so much.

While browsing, I find myself involuntarily clicking on photos for full views of what I imagine to be cuties galore. Much to my dismay, the images aren't thumbnails. There's no full version. So I'm stuck wishing one of these babes was in bed next to me, picking out all the goodies she wants me to buy for her spoiled ass.—*Rob Brink*



ALICE MCCALL

As if we needed another reason to obsess over the superb coolness of the folks down under, here comes Aussie designer Alice McCall—former stylist for Kelis—with a killer fall collection that straight splayed us out. The getups in her "Call of the Wild" offerings include off-the-shoulder minidresses accented with sparkly gold and money green, '90s-tastic allover print jumpers, frocks, and right when we thought we'd straight puke if we saw another skinny jean—she laces her sick pairs in black, mint, and Barney purple with zipper details. Also refreshing are the "Call of the Wild" lookbook pix showing an adorable model with—wait for it—tiny fat folds peaking out of her hip cut-outs! Hark! An actual real body. Love it. alicemccall.com—*Katie Hintz*

DISCO BALLIN'

PHOTO: Jonathon Kambouris

NAILS: Christina Zuleta



In 1978, I was two and my mom was 28 and single. She definitely got her party on 'cause she always talks about it. I HAD to hit her up for this disco theme. **Hey mom, you busy?** Not really. **I wanna ask you about your disco days, where'd you used to go?** We went to Westlake Inn in Westlake Village, California. **Did it have a light-up dance floor?** No. But they did have a disco ball and tons of flashing lights. **Favorite outfit?** It looked like Olivia Newton-John's transformation in *Grease*. Black spandex pants and a black spandex top. And of course Jordache jeans and tube tops. **How many tube tops did you own?** Wow, that takes me back. It's funny that you even remember that. **Um mom, you're wearing them in like every baby picture of me. So, who partied harder you or us?** Well, that's a tough call since I've seen your partying. Ours was more "organic", if you catch my drift. **Favorite songs?** "I Will Survive" by Gloria Gaynor, "I Love The Nightlife" by Alicia Bridges, "The Oogum Boogum Song" by Brenton Wood. **Ever get your nails did like this?** Not quite, but one time we hired someone to come over and give us manicures while we watched soaps and got ready to go out. **When was bedtime?** Well, sometimes I'd roll into work in the black spandex outfit—kinda slutty, huh? **We've done that, it's called the walk of shame. Oh! Did people ever settle scores with a dance off?** Hahahahahaha. No. You've seen too many movies. **Okay, would you say you had boogie fever?** Yeah, I believe I had it. I probably gave it to you. —*as told to Samantha Mueller*

MALE MODEL: JASON HAUN

Cutest MISSBEHAVE Subscriber

Oh Em Gee ladies it's that time again! New issue, new hot-ass subscriber chick. I mean look at this, could we be more steadfastly invincible in all matters of radness? We're like the Rock of Gibraltar over here. And dude, why wouldn't you want to hang with us and gorge on the spoils like champions? Eff an O'Doyle, *Missbehave* Rules!

So listen [read], for those who missed last issue (ew), the super easy magical way to get your smug mug on here is to subscribe! Sign up immediately. We love our members 32.3 percent more than tacky folk who read over peoples' shoulders. Get your own. Sharing is for suckers with bad posture. So, tell us, are you cute enough?

Name: Rika Shimada and her dog Tank **Nickname:** Ricky Minx **Age:** OMG...getting old (29) **Hometown:** Tokyo and NYC **Fave pastime:** Dinner with my girls, doing nails, riding bikes, painting, going to dance parties **On your MP3 player:** A-Trak Mix: "Get on My Pony" on REPEAT!!! (Trillville vs New Young Pony Club)...soooooo good. **Fave designers:** Rag & Bone, Love Boat, Marc Jacobs, Chloé **You in four words:** Sassy, jaunty, tough, bruiser **Dipped in:** Lux shirt, Love Boat shorts, vintage boots, Anna Corinna bag and tank **Shout outs:** To all my homegirls and boys!!!



PHOTO: STEPHEN SCHUSTER

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SPEED RACER

STYLE: Allison Miller

PHOTO: Brooke Nipar

Hear that, bitches? It's the sound of my 340-cubic inch (5.57-liter) V-8 engine accelerating past your slow asses. Vroooooom. Far too furious.

So, yeah, despite the thrill of illegal street racing (and my perpetual first place status whenever I get behind a wheel), being a pro NASCAR driver can be totally vexing. I mean, I know it's for my safety and all, but for serious, my gorgeous locks do not appreciate being sequestered under this beastly helmet. Confined spaces + hot ass days + a buncha G-forces = the gnarliest frizzies ever. Plus, taking off the mask totally effs up my makeup. Gawd. Cherry red lips: hot. Cherry red lipstick smeared on your chin like you did way more than just drive: so not.

Speaking of road head, my fave helmet is the Simpson Shark Inforcer SA2005 cause it's roomier. But it's sorta expensive at $40 more than the Simpson Speedway Vudo SA2005, so it was gut check time: get the better helmet or miss out on my lucky pre-race mani/pedi. As if.

Most of the time, we have to wear these Nomex knits that wick moisture away, but sometimes the silhouette doesn't do mine justice. That's why this zip-up is way fetching, thanks to the fabulousness that is Heatherette. It's snug in all the right places—you should see my Red State male groupies drool when I rock it. You'd swear I was made of Frito Pie or something. Or like, domestic beer. Hmm...I wonder if this onesie's flammable or if it meets any regulations. Whatever, it's fly and it breathes well. That said, there are definitely times when being hot and sticky is a good thing. Like when I've won the race, spanked the competition, and can relax in the back seat with some good looking dude getting *my* pit bossed for a change.—*Jessica Jones*

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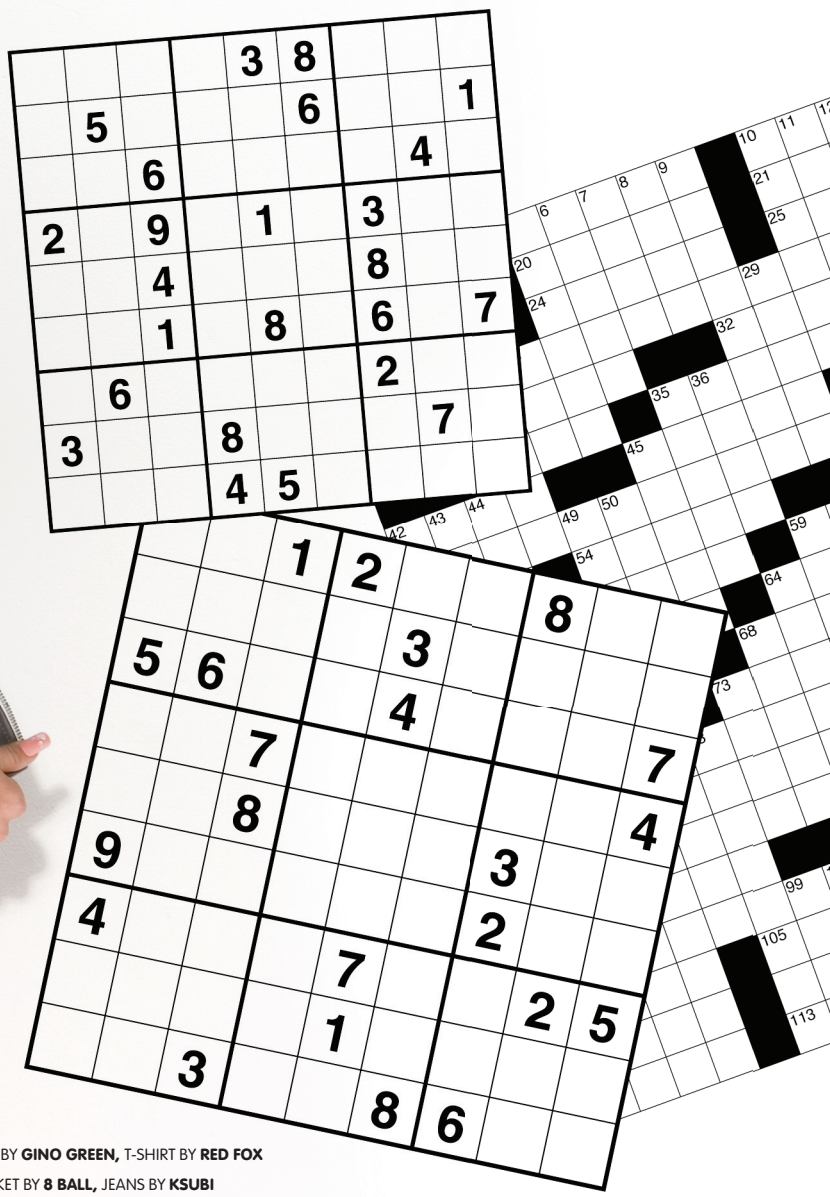
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STYLE: Jackie Dennis

PHOTO: Carlin Mayer



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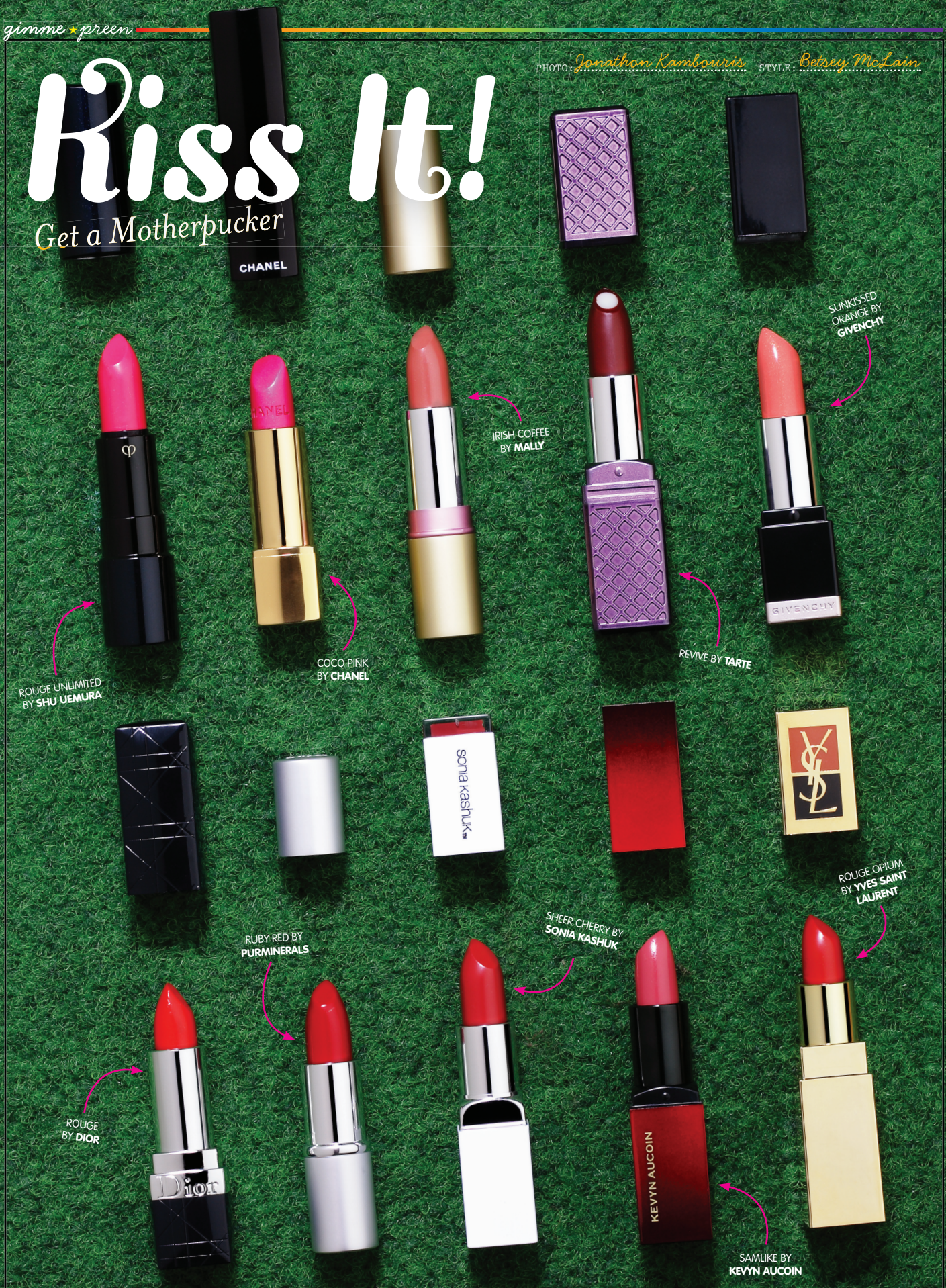
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NICOLE VICIUS

GREENPOINT'S FINEST IN HOLLYWOOD

Standing in a Brooklyn photo studio, Nicole Vicius, the actor, is tiny. This isn't impressive since everyone in Tinsel Town is surprisingly short or rib-juttingly rexi, but it's noteworthy because Vicius is pounding a bottle of Newcastle the size of her torso. "Whoa," swoons the diminutive blonde before polishing off the lager, "Beer's good."

The NYC-born Vicius (her surname abbreviated from her government name of Karpavicius), is the daughter of a New York fire fighter father and interior designer mother. She's best known in affiliation with another beverage—Diet Coke. The TV commercial starring a mischievously sparkly Vicius ran several years ago, but the 25-year-old is still called out as the "Diet Coke girl," especially by random Brooklynite dudes who delight in placing the impish smile that made the spot memorable.

The native New Yorker has since moved on to more prominent roles. She had a bit part in *Half Nelson,* in which she tells the perpetually perspiring Ryan Gosling the "interrupting cow joke," she played a denizen derelict in the Kurt Cobain biopic, *Last Days,* and she co-starred in the awesomely titled, Sapphic chick flick, *Itty Bitty Titty Committee* that absolutely killed at SXSW. "I think it's bullshit that this movie's had such trouble finding distribution," laments Vicius, "the industry's hesitant about a 'lesbian' movie. Meanwhile, it's a classic female coming-of-age story with a really broad appeal."

Vicius' appeal becomes more universal this fall with the release of *Descent,* a drama/thriller with Rosario Dawson, and *Delirious,* a black comedy with Steve Buscemi. The actor is about to become way more recognizable, yet she doggedly refuses to move to Los Angeles and lives in a Greenpoint, Brooklyn house. In this regard Vicius is relentlessly normal. Charmingly so. She has couture in her closet yet speaks of her work without employing douchy terms like "journey" or "craft." "Acting is challenging," Vicius says, "you have to be totally responsive to what a virtual stranger is giving you. Certain actors are egocentric and will block you in a scene whereas someone like Ryan Gosling will be so open that it's incredibly intimate. It's weird that this is what I do but I love it." Nicole Vicius loves it because she's good at it. And I'm sure the whole "hanging out with Ryan fuhreakin' Gosling" thing doesn't hurt either. Sigh.

—Mary H.K. Choi



PLANNING TO ROCK
READY TO RULE

Planning to Rock, née Janine Rostron, is an ethereal enigma who slammed the music world on its ass. Her sound is notoriously hard to describe, but we're scrappy so here goes—PTR is operatic Queen-esque glam-rock vocals (ranging from throaty androgyny to glass-shattering falsetto) over jazzy guitar riffs, hip-hop beats, marching band drums, erratic xylophones, and brass flares.

Her songs are off the chain, yet Rostron's biggest fear is mediocrity—an unlikely prospect since she's on Karl Lagerfeld's iPod. Karl features Rostron's music in an exclusive compilation entitled "musiques qui j'aime," (music I love) and since we've been stalking the guy since he was husky and way into terry cloth, we can't help but swoon at all the synergy.

Rostron's performances are also iller than the sum of their parts. She employs multiple media by synching self-made video presentations with her music, vocals and live performance. The 31-year-old has an earnest yet bold voice and sings on heady subjects like self-discovery. In tackling such topics, Rostron feels that instruments are a distraction. "Without them you really hit on different strains of emotions. You're shedding skins and discovering new skins." Of the videos she says, "it's like having two giant versions of you." In the absence of a band, the images create an interactive dynamic onstage. Sure, it sounds a little schizo but the result is triumphant.

The experience is made even more dazzling by her extravagant Elizabethan costumes and handmade headpieces created with German artist, Leif Christensen. She also rocks stuffed cotton jersey accessories made with friend, and Chicks on Speed member/DIY doyenne, Kathi Glas. Fashion projects with the incomparable London-based Cassette Playa are also rumored.

Collaborations have always been a big deal to Rostron. After moving to Berlin from London, she started her label Rostron Records in 2003, to release her own music and to feature cohorts like mutual mask-lovers, The Knife and experimental San Franciscan lass, Kevin Blechdom. Despite her pantheon of talent and interests, Rostron's number one influence is classical music. As expected, she doesn't pay attention to many contemporary poptards, "If I don't like them, they don't exist. It's like I've mentally killed them. Like, little murders." Check out premeditated mental murder sprees and plan to rock at MySpace.com/planningtorock—*Olivia Allin*





photos: **MATTHEW SALACUSE**





ROMANCE WAS BORN

AUSTRALIAN FASHION HIJINKS ENSUE

If you put a third grade dance recital, a couple koalas, and David Bowie into a blender, the resulting smoothie would be Australian fashion label Romance Was Born. You'd also piss Iman off for having liquefied her man, but she'd come to agree that the metaphor was worth it. It's evident from the company's shiny leggings, wacky prints, and bunny hoodie (complete with carrot drawstrings), that the designers behind the romance, 24-year-old Anna Plunkett and 26-year-old Luke Sales, don't follow any rules. Their glam rock duds have kitted out Cyndi Lauper, Debbie Harry, Karen O, and Lily Allen.

The Aussies met at East Sydney Technical College where they were rivals before they joined forces. They both took risks from the beginning. At school, Plunkett modeled one of Sales' designs, which included fresh squid earrings. "They smell really bad when they're that close to your face," Plunkett recalls. Working as a pair requires some balance. "Fundamentally, we have the same ideas and are on the same page, but sometimes I want things to be really slutty." Sales says.

In 2005, they received an internship with John Galliano in Paris but declined to focus on their own label. Their spring/summer 07/08 collection, "Weird Science," draws inspiration from earth, fire, wind, water, heart (Captain Planet, anyone?) and of course the 1985 flick of the same name, in which two computer nerds try to create the perfect woman. What better accessories to complete these looks than those made from pencils and light bulbs? The label's motto "transeasonal stagewear for the street" is exemplified by their use of eveningwear for day, summer fashion for winter, and um…cupcakes for hats. "People need to take dressing less seriously," Plunkett says, "And don't be afraid to bust out some orange eyeball pumps!" The perfect complement for the bra on your head. romancewasborn.com—*Joanna Borns*




PORTRAIT: SAMUEL HODGE

GOLDIELOCKS
BLONDE AMBITION

Once upon a time, there was a little girl who loved making music and dressing up in colorful clothes. Unfortunately, in the old towne of Croydon, London—which is a bit like New Jersey, but wetter—people weren't supposed to do things differently. In Croydon, you got married and had kids.

But for Sarah Akwisombe, that life just wasn't enough. She did get married, at 19, to a lovely man named Jason, but there was still an itch she couldn't quite scratch. This young woman wanted to rap. And produce. And no one would stand in her way. So in 2006, whilst concocting caffeine-based cocktails at the citadel of coffee, otherwise known as Starbucks, she changed her name to GoldieLocks and got herself a copy of the basic production program, Fruityloops. Upon this magical music-maker, she crafted tracks like "Stereotype" featuring East London's Prince of Grime, Tinchy Stryder. The bass-heavy, brain-bleeder of a single had villagers all over the land bouncing about merrily in their Air Force 1s.

"It started as a bit of a joke," admits GoldieLocks, 22. "I used to be a flute geek—so I knew I wanted to make music. But I definitely didn't mean to rap. Me and my friend were messing about one day, and it ended up sounding sort of okay."

With her brilliant blend of witty lyricisms that bluntly dissect everything from her sister's crummy ex-boyfriend in "Wasteman" (I told her that you were a twat/but she liked you, so I left it at that) to the UK's hapless government in "Kids," GoldieLocks represents an exciting evolution in MCing. In an Industry too often dominated by the boys, Goldie joins Missy Elliott as one of the precious few females making noise both in front and behind the mic. "I'm working with other producers, but I like making my own beats precisely 'cause there are so few girls doing it," she explains.

Building a buzz with her fx-laden fusion of electro, garage, pop, grime, and rap, she now has a publishing deal with Pure Groove, and seminal garage label Locked On are releasing "Wasteman" as her first single. "It's exciting and I'm happy, but I'm taking it all slowly," she decides. "I'm just glad that I get to make music all day and then go home and have tea with my husband," she says. "That's like the perfect life, right?"

The end? Absolutely not. This is definitely a story to be continued… MySpace.com/goldielocksmusic—*Hattie Collins*



photo: **JAMES PEARSON-HOWES**

CHROMEO

ROBO HEARTTHROB

What do you call a love struck robot? If you're Canadian electronic music duo Dave 1 and Pee Thug, you call it, and your band, Chromeo. Subsequently you would make two brilliant albums of heartfelt, computer love songs under the moniker. But "Chrome Romeo" wasn't always the name of the game. "Hijack" was Dave's original name for the group, but the plan was scrapped. "September 11th happened... and we figured it was a bad idea, what with me being an Arab and all," says Pee, 30, who is Lebanese. Good call.

Patrick Gemayel (the Arab) and David Macklovitch (the Jew) met at high school in Montreal, back when they were still "the fresh hip-hop kid" and the "long haired Santana hippie kid," respectively. Their path from hippie funk band to masters of electro-emo was a long and arduous one. "A very important part of the process was my decision to become a wigger," says Dave solemnly, 28. "You must switch from JNCOs to Cross Colours. I started producing hip-hop, but was never technically inclined, so Pee would help me with the sampler and stuff. My younger brother A-Trak started DJing for our band, 'cause back then it was cool to have a DJ." In 2000, Dave's production work got him noticed by Tiga, an influential figure in the Candian electro scene, who approached him about doing a non-hip-hop album for his label Turbo Recording. "I was like okay, but wanted Pee involved. I was getting tired of rap, but we thought electronic music was gay. So we thought Chromeo was going to be a side project, just for money," chuckles Dave.

Despite selling out from jump, the duo spent three years on *She's in Control*, which upon its release in 2004, garnered rave reviews with its winsome disco funk ballads. Their sophomore album, *Fancy Footwork*, released in July, continues Chromeo's self-proclaimed "sexxxx jam" tradition with ardent lyrics, booty shaking beats, brain-infesting hooks, and of course Pee's signature talk box. But are their tender lyrics really real? "They're all about one girl," says Dave of their inspiration, "I like girls who are like Jewish mothers." If that's not sincere then I'll eat my yarmulke. MySpace.com/chromeo—*Yasi Saleh*

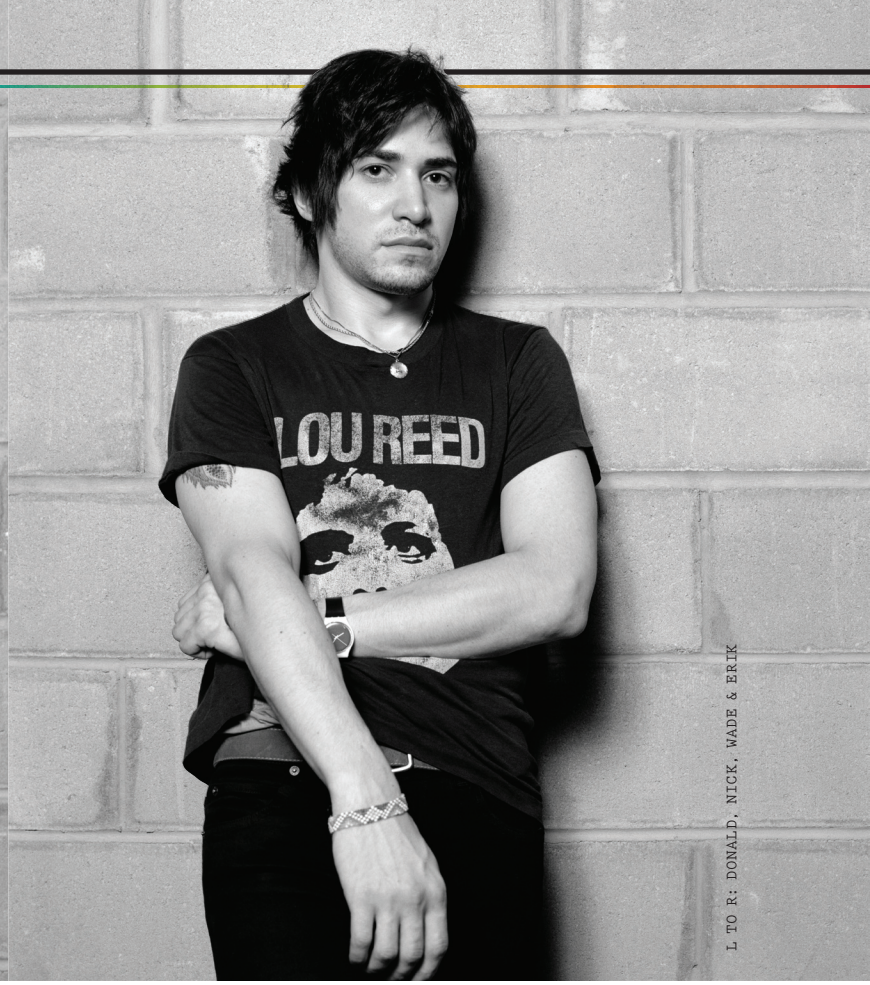


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L TO R: DONALD, NICK, WADE & ERIK

GAME SO TIGHT

Deflowering The Virgins

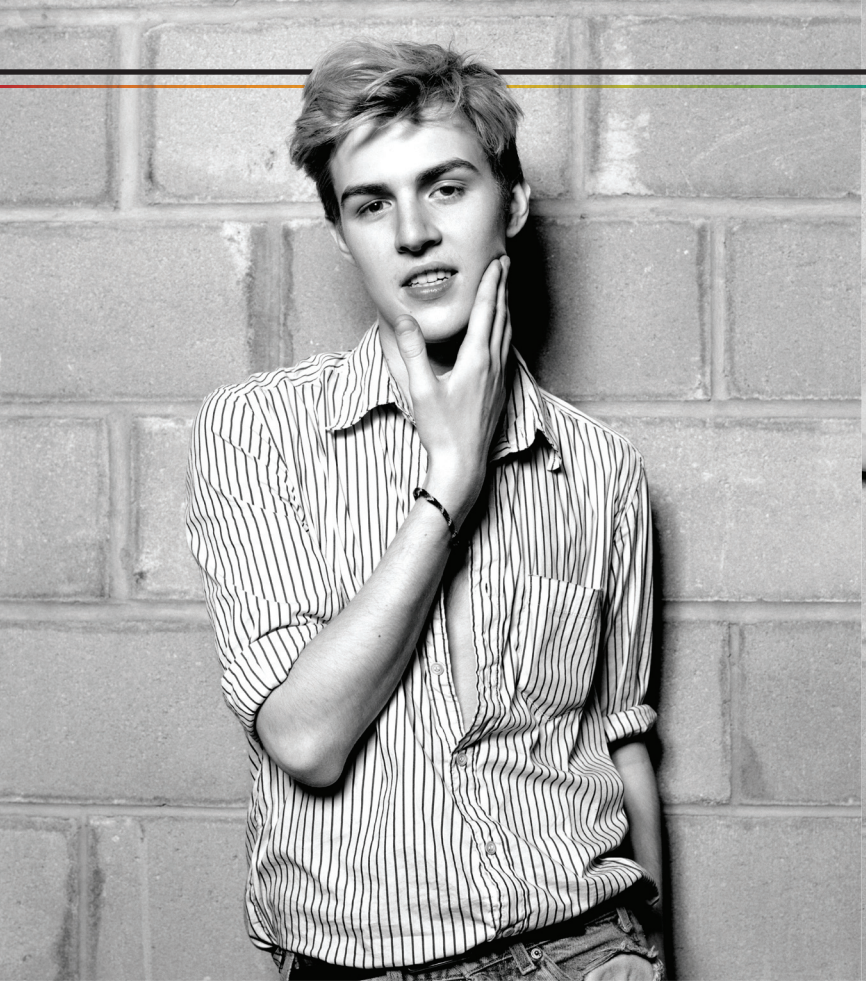
WORDS: **MARY H.K. CHOI** PHOTOS: **BROOKE NIPAR**

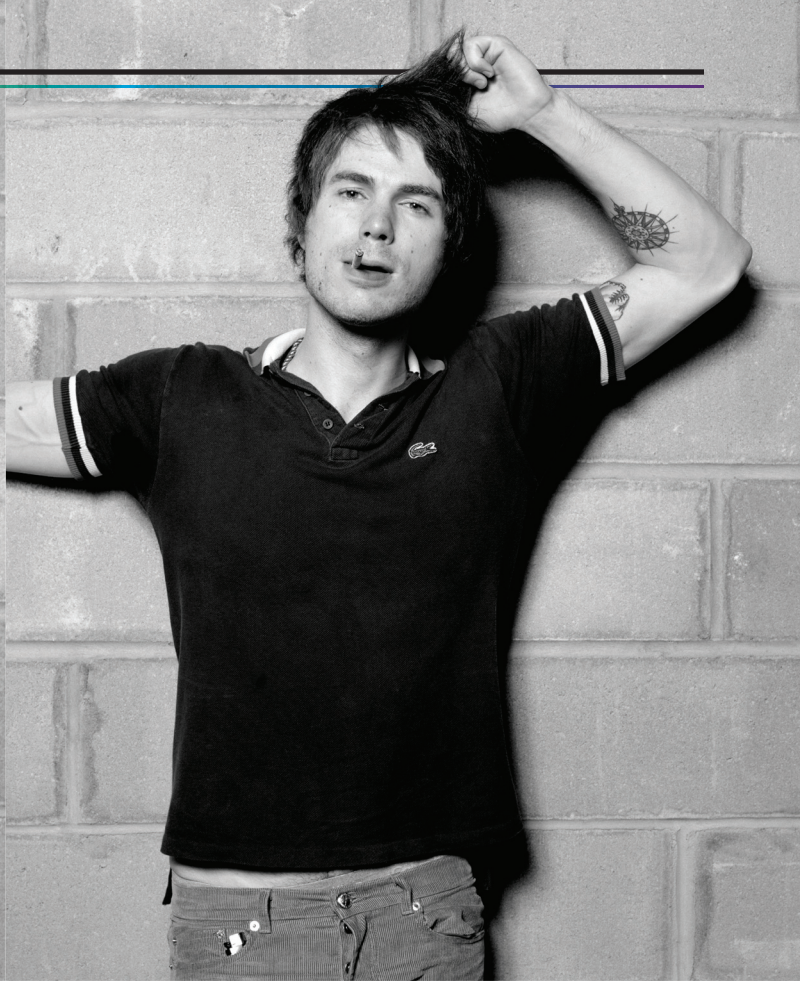
There's just *something* about the boys in New York rock band The Virgins. It's not just that they're cosigned by all the coolest of the cool kids (A-Ron, various Ronsons, an Aoki) or that they're sensitive 'cause they sing knowing songs about girls. There is a far simpler explanation as to why, at first blush, they hold their fans in such thrall. The Virgins, not to put too fine a point on it, are really f*cking hot. *Tiger Beat* hot. Jordan Catalano licking-his-lips-in-a-high-school-hallway hot. Hot enough to degenerate breezily cool, typically bored, New York and LA "It" girls into bobbing, twittering hipster chickenheads. Only a special breed of swagger culls such a response and judging from the MySpace melee, and rumors of well-heeled girls in the fashion industry and dreamy female musicians succumbing to The Virgins' wiles, it seems this quartet has scads of it.

It is, however, grossly negligent to wax solely on how comely the four are. The Virgins, though cute, are also monstrously talented. They are presently recording an album, their first, and on the strength of their eponymous EP and the freakishly well-developed sound of their demos, the group landed a deal with Atlantic even before they found a drummer. The impresario is Donald Cumming, 25, the writer, the singer, and musical genius. He is tall and has dark dirty hair. He wears A.P.C. and sports spectacles artfully smeared with Vaseline, so he can see the world through softer, porno circa-1970s lenses. He has lived in Chinatown his whole life, has modeled, acted, and is known as downtown demagogue/photographer Ryan McGinley's muse. He's cagey ("They may say this is a Donald-driven band but the thing is, I don't drive.") and preternaturally media trained in that skeptical New York brilliant-guy way, and all The Virgins' songs germinate in his brain first. "When I play the band an idea, there's always nervousness," he says of his creative process. "Playing alone in the kitchen in the middle of the night is different but when you have something good you feel lucky and grateful. Usually you don't know where it came from so you say thank you that it came at all."

Though they are thankful for all their sticky hooks, special gratitude should be paid to the muse that bore "Rich Girls." The song is bonkers. The record, much like the band itself, is a perfect storm—sexily aloof lyrics, a delightful if surprising disco bass line, and a sophisticated sound that merits comparisons to The Strokes, not because it mimics New York's former great rock hope, but because it's so viscerally appealing that you can't believe the song didn't exist before they made it. Donald, to his credit, is gracious when allusions are made. "I really like The Strokes," he declares, "They came around when New York needed a f*cking great band and they are absolutely that. Being compared to them is a rite of passage. It's flattering but no one really knows what our sound even is yet. When we're done with the album, the syncopations, rhythms, I don't know if at that point people will draw such conclusions."

Such parallels are indeed premature. True, they write catchy tunes; true, they rep NYC to the fullest; true, they'll have zero problems bagging Drew Barrymore types once their album drops, but there is a sonic diversity on their EP that showcases a far less "classic rock" band. The Virgins are unafraid to experiment, yet they manage to hit what works. This is what will





ultimately delineate the vestal dudes from the embolism dudes—The Virgins are so cool, they're not too cool for school. They aren't stoic when they perform. They're personable, a little nervous, but visibly amped to be there. For a deft, popular NY band, the enthusiasm is refreshing.

"I'm really excited that I get to make good on my intentions," states Nick Zarin-Ackerman, 29, The Virgins bass player. "I just want to make music, it's the getting your photo taken, interviews, and the attention that's weird." Nick is easy to pay attention to. He has warm inviting brown eyes, smiles in a shy manner reminiscent of Gael Garcia Bernal, rocks black Cheap Monday jeans, hails from Forest Hills, and met and befriended Donald at a YMCA sleepaway camp when they were kids. Though the band's syncopations have yet to musically come to fruition, the cadence when Nick and Donald talk to each other is filially familiar. Despite working in a close creative capacity there are no petulant skirmishes. Nick trusts Donald. "We all respect each other but Donald gets a veto," he says of his bestie front man. "Usually he's right. He's able to see the big picture, like he's farther away from it than the rest of us." Nick is level headed about most things. He eschews booze and drugs and it seems Parliaments are his only vice. "There is no strange ass for us," he insists. "We toured nationwide with Jet but they had a bus and we had a van so we had to chase them to budget sleep. We couldn't party 'til 3 a.m. It's flattering [to get hit on] but it's always very clear in terms of what it is—some slightly embarrassed girl talking to you. It's easy to move on."

Work too is the focal point for Wade M. Oates, the lead guitar player, who at 21 years old is the Joey McIntyre of the group. He grew up in the East and West Village, wears Yankees caps, and has a voracious intellectual curiosity. He used to be really into space but is presently obsessed with the sea and color blindness. In sixth grade he'd ditch school to join tour groups of kids going to the Museum of Natural History and coincidentally attended the same summer camp where Nick and Donald met. Wade looks like an affluent but disenchanted '80s heartthrob. He is beatifically pale and straight up glows as if lit from the inside. Fittingly, he's rarely seen without Ray-Ban wayfarers. Despite his youth, Wade has that scrappily matter of fact NYC sagacity that often makes little kids in the city the best people to ask for directions. "I equate being a New Yorker and being a New York band with how much you care about the history," he states. "Me, I care a lot and make sure I know my shit. I don't miss old New York. I don't see the point in sitting around and talking about what used to go down. Everyone says New York is dead and it's not. It's just about taking strides to make the scene happen and that's what we're trying to do as a band."

Though The Virgins are part of the downtown New York social network, their aggressive performance schedule and work ethic will prevent them from becoming just another hipster cautionary tale. They enjoy the support of Manhattan's trendiest but from a vantage holed up in their studio on West 30th. You won't soon find them stoop-sitting on the LES, starving on a diet of scene cred alone. The Virgins are on their job.

"I've never been more challenged," declares drummer Erik Ratensperger of the recording process. "But I prefer this setting to a 'professional' one. This definitely beats pencil holders, staplers, and Dell computers bought to keep costs low [*Laughs*]." Erik, 28, joined The Virgins last fall and is not from the Triborough. He is from Connecticut and is the most recent addition. After interviewing no less than 40 potential drummers Erik met Wade through a friend, and the foursome found the chemistry they were seeking. Lanky, articulate, and smart enough to be slow to let on how smart he is, Erik is also unlikely to squander the band's momentum. "We're all grateful for getting to do this," he says, "There are a lot of people who are doing it out there, who don't appreciate the opportunity or exploit it prematurely. I don't have specifics on who… Well, of course I do, but I'm not gonna tell *you*."

The Virgins, for their misleadingly uninitiated name, are spectacularly savvy. And even in a shit storm of schadenfreude like New York City, most who listen to their music admit they can't help but like them. These Virgins are experts. They're gonna be huge and not just 'cause they'd make for a totally foxy pull-out poster. ★



We ♥ Wildboyz

Jackass Chris Pontius Drops Science on Hookers, Cervixes, and How Not to F*ck Up a Marriage.

WORDS: **CHRIS PONTIUS**

I got married on October 29th, 2004. My wife is from Ireland. I met her in Dublin when we were promoting the first *Jackass* movie. I just never came home. I was supposed to be there for two or three nights, but stayed two months. I met her and I was in love with her, and she was in love with me. I knew we were going to be together, it was crazy. By the time I met Claire, there had been just so much debauchery. When you go on TV and stuff, you can't keep from pushing things further than normal. The level, the bar of craziness, it just rises.

At my bachelor party, there were strippers and transsexuals. Knoxville couldn't make it, he was doing a movie with John Waters at the time, but John hooked him up with gay porn stars and they came. There were naked people everywhere. It was really f*cked. Before I blacked out, I remember thinking the party really made me want to get married.

Guys are guys and will say shit like, 'Why get married? You could run around with a lot of groupies.' But I don't know. If you're a guy, you're never going to finish sowing your wild oats. Even if you're with the world's most beautiful girl, all that's going to do is whet your appetite for more. As a man, you just have to accept that. Sometimes guys are like 'I'm married and I don't know why 'cause I'm always looking at other girls.' Dude, it's 'cause you're a guy! You *should* want to f*ck every girl you see. It's never going to go away. Once you accept it, it's a lot easier. Guys aren't weird for wanting lots of girls. Girls and guys should know that.

I had this crazy ex-girlfriend here in LA. Man, it was real bad. I couldn't get away from her. She would try to have fistfights with me constantly. She kicked me in the head once, she was nuts. *Missbehave* readers: Don't be a lame girl 'cause I know what lame girls are like. She was really jealous. I'd go away and she'd be so worried about me messing around on her, when she'd actually be messing around on me. I'm not naive to you girls. I know how women are. You're not as helpless as most guys think. Guys are physically stronger but I think women are mentally stronger. Men are more straightforward, they can be manipulative but women are a little more under-the-radar about the shit they do. When women do something bad to their boyfriend they might not tell anybody. For guys, all their buddies will know, and then maybe the girl will find out.

Girls are funny. When girls know a guy that they used to see is f*cking a lot of girls, they're pissed. But when the guy falls in love with a girl, that's what really pisses them off. What they want is the guy's heart. Guys are more concerned about bodies. A girl will cheat on a guy and justify it by the fact that they didn't have feelings for him. This doesn't work with guys. A guy doesn't care if the girl has feelings or not. He doesn't care if the girl *loves* him. The guy just doesn't want another guy sticking his dick in her. Girls are the opposite. She doesn't *like* him sticking his dick in other girls, but really it's the emotions. If he really *loves* another girl, that's what really gets her. That hurts her way more. That shit's f*cked.

Girls are different from guys but every woman is made differently. Their angles differ. Like, some women like to be on top and some on the bottom, but it's not just comfort it's the angle of the vagina and what position suits it best. The cervix is not that far back, so if the dick goes in and hits the cervix, it either has to go over it or under it and stretch the skin back. The pussy is so elastic. It's amazing. I've been told most



of the sensation is in the first three or four inches, and even the G-spot isn't that far in. I know a lot because I've read a lot about it. Not that I'm gonna hit it every time or something, but I wanted to learn just what these things meant. I looked it up in Wikipedia. I wanted to understand just what I was dealing with.

I can't imagine being without Claire. I could never do anything bad to her and I couldn't ever lie to her. I mean, I *could* lie to her but I really wouldn't ever need to. I did some article about hookers for a men's magazine. I was in Tijuana and I'd talk to her on the phone from whorehouses to check in. We have that kind of trust. Steve-O and I meet some f*cked up people on these trips for *Wildboyz*. I know this guy who's a rock star, he hooked up with a girl and then she sucked his dog's dick. That's f*cked up. He was stoked for his dog but he was pretty blown away. Within the whole rock star lifestyle, you come across that kind of stuff. You're just a recipient of what's coming your way. You're like, 'What the f*ck is wrong with people?' It's shocking that a girl would be such a fan of some guy, that she'd not only want to suck his dick, but his dogs too. You'd never think that would happen until you're in that type of situation.

There was a lot of whoring going on in our travels. They were mostly girls, I think. We were filming something in Kenya and a lot of these places are in the middle of nowhere. Me, Steve-O, and the crew were in Rwanda 'cause we were filming with gorillas. One of the guys on our crew, he has weird taste for f*cked up girls, and he met some girl who looked like Gregory Hines, but fat. He went back to the hotel with her. It was a real nice hotel, and they messed around. At one point, she starts puking. So she's puking her guts up and that's when she starts going to bathroom at the same time. Diarrhea everywhere. It was f*cked and he had to clean it up. He pretty much had a nervous breakdown after that.

A guy can be talking to a hooker and say no, but once they start grabbing his dick and getting him aroused, it's like forget about it. They've drawn him in. Sometimes a guy will meet a girl that's not really a girl and this individual will maybe start sucking on his dick before telling him. I've known a few guys who have been not sure about it, but once it gets to a certain point, they don't care. That happened to my friend. While it was happening he was texting our other friend like, 'Wow, this dude's got rad tits.' That's the kind of level that things get to. Years ago, we never would've imagined this was acceptable behavior. Now, that kind of shit always happens.

Love actually sucks. You can't win. Sometimes you see people going out, and then they move in together, and get married almost by default. I guess they're in love, but you can learn to love anybody. I'm not reformed at all, I'm just with somebody. I'm the way I am and I'll probably get in trouble a lot in the future too. I had some bad flings and I could regret all that, but maybe if I didn't go through it, it wouldn't have led me to Claire. If I hadn't turned that corner, it would've never happened. Being with Claire makes me feel better about all the horrors of the past.

I've had a lot of relationships so I've learned what not to do. You can't just be like, my way or the highway. You have to compromise somewhere. I take better care of myself now that I'm married. I used to be kind of fat, and I would always be wasted. Now I'm not so fat. It sucks that I'm married 'cause I'm way hotter now. ★





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Be it known that we, the greatest, are misthought.

-Cleopatra



MISSBEHAVE'S ULTIMATE GUIDE TO EUROPEAN JUMP OFFS

So, you've got your year out, you've worked for half of it, and now it's time to hit Europe; time to broaden your mind, see new cultures, and "find yourself." But it's not just about wandering around Topshop all afternoon and seeing whether Starbucks tastes the same in eight different cities; your Grand Tour is an unrivaled opportunity to get laid, break some hearts, and desperately try to explain in a foreign language that you need the morning-after pill. As a cultured European male—think of David Bowie around *Station to Station* and you're in the right sophistication ballpark—I'm here to warn you what to expect. You're not in the world of fraternities, good teeth, and men who go mental after two Miller Lites any more, you're in Europe. And we do things a little differently...



words: ***Justin Quirk*** *illustration:* ***Dust La Rock***

NORWAY

Why you'll go: Possibly Europe's most beautiful country. Clean, civilized, friendly. **What you'll find:** The worst of both worlds. Norwegian women are genetically perfect, hot-beyond-belief Arctic foxes. Men, on the other hand are either mummy's boy Eurotrash, or enormous knuckleheads in Berghaus jackets, purple-faced on vodka and unhinged by the long dark winters. You'll spend the entire trip avoiding men who look like fists on legs, while feeling about as attractive as Ugly Betty on her period every time a woman walks past you.

SWEDEN

Why you'll go: To recover from Norway. **What you'll find:** Aside from their mon-eyed set who are like a less evolved version of Britain's royal family, Swedish men are a good bet. They have an embarrassing tendency to 'party like it's 2002', dancing around with their arms around each other while wearing trucker hats and listen-ing to Phoenix, but that's not so bad. Bear in mind that they tend to have a lot of money—great when you're scrounging free drinks, not so great when your sexual gymnastics have them using their limitless resources to pursue you across Europe.



WALES

Why you'll go: It's kind of like a picturesque natural park stuck on the side of England. **What you'll find:** Wales suffered a Detroit-like industrial collapse in the mid-eighties, and the pervading sense of manic depression is palpable. Wales has the highest rates of steroid abuse in the UK, so the men tend to be enormous. And on a pretty short fuse. And not fond of taking 'no' for an answer. If you sleep with anyone, all their friends will stand 'round the bed videoing it on their phones and making honking noises.

ENGLAND

Why you'll go: Because you imagine that we all hang out with Bloc Party before backflipping down Carnaby Street into a Union Jack-colored E-Type Jaguar, pausing only to high-five Kate Moss. **What you'll find:** Slight tendency to consider themselves far more attractive/intelligent than they really are and blessed with skin/teeth that Americans last saw in 1942. Six months ago everyone was dressing like Pete Doherty, but have now switched to nu-rave and look fucking ridiculous. Social life revolves around binge drinking and casual, unprotected sex—just go along with it. Despite the moronic 'fuck Bush' rhetoric, all English people secretly want to live in America, so beware of swapping addresses.

SPAIN

Why you'll go: Laid-back, Mediterranean culture, nice weather, good music festivals. **What you'll find:** Outside of Barcelona, Spain largely consists of desolate scrubland, half-finished hotel complexes, rabid dogs, and meals that involve a lot of blood. If you wander into any of these towns, you're the locals' one shot at marrying outside of their gene pool and will be pestered continuously. At some point, you'll be walking through the woods when a 13-year-old boy will run towards you, masturbating. This is perfectly normal behavior and usually harmless.

RUSSIA

Why you'll go: So you can get the exciting frisson that comes from being a Valley Girl who's rubbing shoulders with gangsters while wearing a fox-fur hat. **What you'll find:** Rampant alcoholism has reduced Russia's life expectancy to 58 and 42,000 of them die every year after being poisoned from bootleg booze. The post-Communist meltdown has turned about 1 percent of Russians into billionaires and the other 99 percent into wide-eyed desperate lunatics. It's like Spring Break with Suicidal Tendencies.



GERMANY

Why you'll go: Berlin has overtaken East London as Europe's trendiest spot right now, but is much cheaper. **What you'll find:** Achingly fashionable young men and gnarly, squat-hardened old punks. As an agent of bourgeois capitalism, you'll be expected to pay for everything by both groups, and it might piss you off not meeting a single person with a 'proper' job (as opposed to pie-in-the-sky 'creative plans'). Still a surprising number of German men of all ages wearing those red and white PLO scarves. Which you think they'd be wary of, given Germany's history with idiotic anti-Semitic movements.



CROATIA

Why you'll go: Ultra-lux, Dubrovnik is a world heritage site and has been the redoubt of Europe's hyper-rich for almost seventy years. **What you'll find:** Croatia went into meltdown 15 years ago during Balkan War III; a lot of potential suitors might be hindered by missing limbs, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Or maybe they just killed someone's entire family? Probably best not to get them pissed and start pestering them for stories about "guns and stuff." A pretty hardcore bunch in general, partly due to geography—they didn't just miss out on post-war democracy; even the Enlightenment took a swerve 'round the region. Unreconstructed ideas about gender roles.



ITALY

Why you'll go: Because you liked the look of The Interminable Mr. Ripley. **What you'll find:** Italian pests rove around on shitty scooters in large packs, trying to look debonair while they're basically sitting on sewing machines. They will expect you to take it in the ass, due to strange Catholic notions of sex before marriage and 'preserving virginity'. This anal rampage will take place in a field, as they live with their mum and 28 other excitable relatives until they're 30.



ALBANIA

Why you'll go: It's cheap, used to be part of the Ottoman Empire, and full of pyramids built by former nutjob president Enver Hoxha, plus on your return, all your friends will say "You went to Albania? Get the f*ck out of here. What are you? Vasco da Gama?" **What you'll find:** A propaganda film from the Soviet bloc. The whole society is run on the settling of "gjakmarrja" (blood feuds) so you may find that a quick fumble in one of Tirana's bars finds you embroiled in some psychotic death match between two clans.





WELCOME TO THE DOLLHOUSE



WORDS: **LAURA CHECKOWAY** PHOTOS: **BRIAN BERMAN**



FOR COLLECTORS OF ASIAN BALL-JOINTED DOLLS, IT'S WAY MORE THAN A HOBBY, IT'S A LIFESTYLE. LET THE IDOLATRY BEGIN...



JENNIFER AND HER FIANCÉ EMANUEL

In a land far far away, well Kyoto, Japan, to be exact, there is a sprawling 600-year-old estate surrounded by a perfectly manicured garden. It is said that betwixt the flowers, above the creek, visitors (the truly lucky ones anyway) might catch a beautiful angel fluttering by on one-of-a-kind, limited edition polyurethane wings. This pretty province is known as Tenshi-no-Sato, or "Angel's Home" and the angels in question are Super Dollfies.

Dollfie, a portmanteau of "Doll Figure," is the registered trademark of ball-jointed resin figurines made by VOLKS Incorporated. VOLKS, a Japanese toy company, is the market leader of the Asian Ball-Jointed Doll craze sweeping Japan, Korea, and now America. The trend is so widespread that VOLKS enjoys an annual turnover of 5 billion yen [USD $41 million].

Tenshi-no-Sato is the profitable company's promised land. At the compound, girls eat cake at an angel-themed café, there's a Dollfie beauty salon where hair is perfected and makeup applied (or "face-ups" as they're referred to within the doll community), and in case of doll emergencies, there is also a hospital on-site.

Those who pilgrimage to this doll Mecca are further rewarded with the opportunity to adopt a rare Super Dollfie in an Omukae (welcome home) ceremony. Amidst dense blossoms and flickering candles, your limited edition addition is christened by an excitable Japanese man in a velvet cape. "Congratulations," he proclaims, "You have just become the life partner of a Super Dollfie!" To gain entry to this kingdom, you must be the "guardian" of a Super Dollfie. VOLKS refuses gauche terms like "buying" or "purchasing"—to acquire a Super Dollfie is to "mukaeru" one, or "welcome it into your life."

THE BACK STORY

Ball-Jointed Dolls, of which Super Dollfies are but one kind, is a technical and dry term that does little to capture the beauty of the dolls themselves. BJDs are stunning. They're also totally creepy. They have fully articulated hands and feet, with limbs that move fluidly but stay in place when posed. They are proportionate to an actual human form at six feet tall with a 26-inch waist and they are anatomically correct. Meaning, yes, the male dolls have penises and the females have vaginas. They have lustrous, immaculately coiffed hair and though their eyes are detailed to appear lifelike, their glassy stares are unmistakably vacant. Dollfies sorta look like gorgeous little dead people and when expressions are painted onto their faces by professional face-up artists, the dolls seem to emit the same emotion—longing. Like Pinocchio, it's as if they just want to be real. And Dollfie owners would love nothing more than for this to be true.

Angie, 27, New Orleans, bartender, collecting since 2004, 16 dolls: *Each one of my dolls is a different extension of my personality. Like the goth ones and punk rock ones who date the motorcycle leather boy. I also have this lesbian couple, they're very cheesy and wear little short-shorts. I think it's just a way to live vicariously through them and do things you wouldn't do in your everyday life.*

Chiachi, 25, New Jersey, animator, collecting since 2006, 3 dolls: *I see them as my kids. The thing is, I have a busy work schedule. Every day I come home and I see them sitting there smiling and feel happy. They don't really listen to you, they have their own character and they change. I have one who is a queen, she started out goth but has totally become a princess. Shiro is shy and he's kind of silly. He's a really cute boy but is turning really girly so I started making him wear skirts. Syo is his older brother. He's more of a Samurai type, so I got him a sword but lately he's getting less manly. He likes to sleep with me, he's become mama's baby.*

Hideyuki Shigeta, a compelling middle-aged charmer and President/CEO of VOLKS Incorporated, fully supports this weirdly anthropomorphic covenant. "No matter where someone comes from," begins Mr. Shigeta, "We feel close to the figure or thing that looks like us. VOLKS believes in the idea of, 'Super Dollfies as Another Yourself.' We adore the other self. [It's a self] that we could have been. We're so happy that Super Dollfies love, support, and comfort their US owners."

Such comfort doesn't come cheap. Super Dollfies sell for about 1000 bucks each, with accessories and outfits fetching additional hun-

dreds of dollars. Extremely rare Dollfies sell for upwards of $3000 on the secondary market. "Another Yourself" is a beguiling concept, regardless of the price tag. Your Dollfie is like you but better. And maybe it's worth it.

The 200-plus girls and women (and handful of guys) who attended the VOLKS Dolls Party 2, held in New York this past June, definitely think so. In this surreal bubble, a convention held at Manhattan's Fashion Institute of Technology, the excitement is palpable. This is the first US Dolpa (Doll Party) where there are training classes on doll maintenance, and this is also the single occasion when a new Dollfie, Masha, will be unveiled for purchase through lottery. A cursory glance might make the congregation appear lonely, sad, or freaky, but spend a few minutes amidst the ecstatic bedlam and it's clear that for them, the thousands of dollars they've parted with gives them something priceless in return.

RESIN FRIENDS, REAL MONEY.

Zen, 22, New Jersey, bank customer service agent, collecting since 2000, 4 dolls and 4 floating heads: *Everyone has their expensive weird hobbies. I've joked for a long time that I have a job soley to pay for dolls and the dolls' clothes.*

Jackie, 26, Virginia, animator, collecting since 2006, 5 dolls: *I got into Dollfies because my boyfriend collects dolls. He spends about $2000-4000 a month. He's rich but likes independent girls, so I buy my own. I eat less. I don't buy a lot of other stuff. It's a lot of sacrifice. The way normal people have a souped-up car or a big-ass house, I have dolls. My happiness isn't through cars or houses, it's through Dollfies.*

Jennifer, 19, Philadelphia, ballet student, collecting since 1999, 11 dolls: *It's not an easy hobby. A lot of people save for years to get their first doll. It's pretty odd, but my family is into it because they have different sorts of hobbies that are also odd. Emmanuel is my fiancé. He has two of them. And my dad likes it. He's getting his first soon.*

Angie: *My most expensive doll was released for one of these Dolpas. He was $1100. It's worth it. I bought a house and after shelling out a $32,000 check, its like, okay, a thousand…not so bad. I don't have any kids, I don't have a husband, I am responsible only for myself. .*

Jen, 37, San Francisco, computer programmer, collecting since 2005, 15 dolls: *We didn't have foxy teenage boy dolls when I was a kid. I'd never seen anything like this, I would have been all over it. I got into a bidding war but won. I paid $3600 bucks for one.*

Pony Geri, 30, Florida by way of Venezuela, advertising executive, collecting since 2002, over 200 dolls: *Dolls are my everything. I don't want to talk about finances. I get a lot of drama about that. For a lot of people, it's very hard to afford these dolls. People get pissed off if you have all this money. They have one or two, or they're saving for months to buy one. I get the people that say, Oh my God, it's a sin that you have so many.*

BJDS AND BDD

The money becomes more intense the deeper you get into it. Not only are the dolls themselves expensive, but there is a kaleidoscope of options to modify them. Since Dollfies aren't just lifelike but are like you, you can't help but think many of the doll collectors, especially the ones who make numerous small modifications, are transferring some form of Body Dysmorphic Disorder on to these bewitching inanimate objects. It's not unlike an addiction to plastic surgery—the more changes they make, the more unique and perfect the doll (and subsequently the collector) becomes.

The Full Choice System is an involved one, it's an option offered only by VOLKS in which you select all elements of your Dollfie's appearance. The number of permutations that a wholly customizable doll can undergo is impressive. You must also consider what the ears, skin color, eye color, hands, feet, legs, arms, and hair says about your Dollfie's "personality."

"There are four steps in the process," the jocular woman behind the Full Choice System desk at the Dolpa New York tells Angie, the New Orleans bartender who is decked out in black combat boots and a corset. "First we discuss image and personality, then the order process. Then, it's sent to Japan and in three months your doll will be ready!" says the lady before asking, "Do you have a name yet?" "I won't know until I meet her," Angie replies pragmatically. "What's her character like?" inquires the chipper woman. "She's angry but sweet on the inside," Angie states. "She's a tough girl that's sweet?" asks the lady. "Correct." Angie retorts. "Well, it sounds like you want Sunlight Skin…"

RACHEL, 27, Chicago, office manager, collecting since 2005, 6 dolls: *I've had dolls not work out. One had a beautiful face-up but next to my others she just didn't fit. I really wanted a certain kind of doll, the one I got was beautiful but didn't fit in. With Full Choice, you pick everything.*

Kim, 26, Delaware, record store manager, collecting since 2005, 7 dolls: *I've done the Full Choice System. You have to do it in a VOLKS store, in person, or at a Dolpa. I've had whole dolls and changed their eyes, their wigs and had them repainted. I have a doll right now that started his life as a girl, but wanted to be a boy. I took the head and stuck it on a boy and had him repainted.*



FLOATING HEADS WITH BEAUTIFUL FACE-UPS

BROKEBACK DOLLFIE

"You know lots of the dolls are gay, right?" Scout, a 16-year-old Gothic Lolita with bleached blond hair from Manhattan's Upper West Side asks. "Almost all of the boys are gay. I knew I wanted two dolls, both boys, and I wanted them to be lovers. Once I got into the hobby, I realized, wow, I'm not the only one."

She certainly isn't. There are a gang of fey, fussily-dressed male dolls in the room today, escorted by guardians like Scout, many of whom aren't exactly the boyfriend type. Most seasoned doll collectors amass male dolls exclusively; and if fantasy is a large part of the BJD world, in this regard the fantasy is also about control. It's about Yaoi, (Yamanashi Ochinashi Iminashi) which means no climax, no punch line, no meaning. It's a genre within anime and manga that focuses on male-male romantic relationships. Two of the most popular movies during Japan's Yaoi boom in 1992 were *Okoge* (Fag-Hag) directed by Takehiro Nakajima, and *Kira Kira Hikaru* (Twinkle), directed by Joji Matsuoka. In both, female protagonists fall in love and then happily marry gay men. Yaoi is a non-threatening way for the girls to completely dominate their relationships with the male gender, perhaps to a degree that many of them can't in real life. The boy Dollfies share tender male-on-male love—men treating their lovers as their female owners would want men to treat them. Besides, what's better than Barbie f*cking Ken? Easy. Ken f*cking Ken.

Jackie: *Yaoi is like pornography for girls. If it's a guy and a guy, you can see both of their faces when they're turned on. Japanese culture made it popular for girls to see two beautiful men of their choice being together.*

Kim: *All seven of mine are boys. Growing up, there were tons of pretty girl dolls, like Barbie, but no one ever liked Ken 'cause he wasn't very attractive. I like the idea of two really pretty men being in a relationship together—it's kind of like lesbian porn for guys. All of my boy dolls are gay, that's just the way they ended up being.*

Jen: *I have all boys, 15 total. They all look fairly punky, some of them are pretty, some are goth, and some are more butch. There are no girl dolls in the house…so if they're not gay, they're definitely lonely* [laughing].

DOLL REINCARNATION

At the New York Dolpa, Mr. Shigeta towers over a podium while the room hangs on his every word. Behind him, a film plays on a big screen retelling the story of Sarah Schoch, an 18-year-old VOLKS collector who "went to heaven" earlier this year due to a terminal illness. Two girls with Dollfies in their laps exchange teary glances and grip their hearts while maudlin music serves as the soundtrack to this tragic tale. Before her passing, Sarah visited Tenshi-no-Sato through the Make-A-Wish Foundation and was given two Dollfies by Mr. Shigeta himself. Today, an angelic tribute Super Dollfie, Masha, an *FDQ* (Fashion Doll Quarterly) exclusive, is available for purchase through lottery. Only 75 have been made. "VOLKS proudly presents to all SD fans in America, a perfect Super Dollfie, Masha." On display, surrounded by white flowers and spotlights, Masha has light violet eyes, pale skin, a white pin tucked bonnet, sundress, overdress, bloomers, and white boots. You get all of this for a cool $900. To build the anticipation of Masha's release, Mikey, one of the lead designers at VOLKS Inc., posted a letter to the deceased Sarah Schoch online:

Sarah, Sarah, Sarah, how have you been? Your own chosen child is coming to this world soon. Her pretty face is so clear now with her eyes wide open. When she put fine looking dresses, she will fly to where you are. She'll be with you soon, so please hold on til she comes. Everybody is waiting to see a picture of you and your child when you are as good as you were in Japan.
Thank you.
From Mikey

Putting energy and man hours into your Dollfie is one thing. A toy company posthumously impregnating you with a doll baby is another entirely. The oddball factor is only magnified by riled up Super Dollfie fans who are in essence purchasing pieces of Sarah through these dolls. It's like a reverse Eucharist in Catholicism. Through faith, the flesh that is Sarah becomes the resin that is Masha. The BJD flock is more than stoked to have their piece of this VOLKS doll history. On the BJD web site, Den of Angels, the message boards are ablaze with eager collectors awaiting their Mashas.

Gothiclibrarian, 06-11-2007, 09:03 AM:
Knowing that Sarah had a hand in her release makes her that much more special. I began the love for Masha, feeling the name Ilse may be right. I will have to spend some time with her though to be sure.

Paleonaturist, 06-16-2007, 06:18 PM:
Masha is coming to play at my house too! She's going to be delicate but determined. Everyone's visions of who Masha is to become are delightful and entrancing! I know she'll be very happy with you all! It's like she's found the homes of the people she belongs with.





SUPER DOLLFIE MASHA & ZEN FROM NEW JERSEY

BYE BYE DOLLY

Those who passionately collect these captivating dolls have different motivations but one thing is clear—BJDs, as beautiful and pampered as they are, enrich their guardians lives with their whimsical neuroses and enchanting personalities. Despite the budgetary sacrifice, all the Dolpa attendees are spent and happy. An angelic Japanese version of "Amazing Grace" plays as the VOLKS staff packs up the conference room and the New York convention comes to a close. Mr. Shigeta stands by the door saying sayonara and handing small souvenirs to his devotees as they leave. Out amongst the bustle of 7th Ave., one girl has changed out of her elaborate Gothic Lolita dress and into jeans and a T-shirt. Traffic speeds by as she and her friend hail a cab. Beside them, in carrying cases on the curb, thousands of dollars worth of Dollfies sit quietly and patiently wait for their ride home. ★


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M.I.A. has returned. The one time underdog is on top and despite visa drama and censorship, she's got a second album rife with infectious hooks and killer collabos. It's about to be a pandemic. Kala back!

WORDS: **ALEX RAYNER** PHOTOS: **BROOKE NIPAR**

STYLE: CARRI MUNDANE MAKEUP: MADGE FOSTER LETTERING: HOST18







SHOES BY **DEREK LAM**, SHIRT, JEANS & JEWELRY ARE STYLIST'S OWN.

Ladies, if you don't get a place at the undergraduate institution of your dreams, why not try M.I.A.'s college entrance technique? When the British/Tamil rapper, filmmaker, visual artist, and hot pop phenomenon was rebuffed by London's Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design (notable alumni: Stella McCartney, Alexander McQueen, Jarvis Cocker), she used what her tutor described, quite correctly, as "emotional blackmail".

"I said that if they didn't accept me," she recalls, stone-faced, "I was going to become a hooker." Bright and pretty, but poor and without the requisite grades, a teenage M.I.A., Mathangi "Maya" Arulpragasam, begged the college for an interview, and once granted, explained just what she would do if she weren't singled out from the 16,000 applicants for one of their precious 20 places.

"'There's nothing else for me,'" she remembers saying, "'I can't get a job at a bank, I'm not qualified to go to any conventional universities. If I don't get in, I'm going to catch the number 19 bus, go to [London's red light district] Kings Cross and be a hooker for three years. I'll end up in prison, or I'll be a really good criminal, and, while I do it, I'll make a better film than the kids you're going to enroll.'"

She was exaggerating. "Of course, I wouldn't have done that," M.I.A. concedes, "but I felt like I had to change my life; I had nothing left." Her college professor sighed and told her he would call her at home in 20 minutes. The girl raced home, received the call, and accepted her place.

Ms. Arulpragasam's university enrollment is one of a number of instances in which she beat the odds. Today she sits in the conference room of her UK label XL, more than ten years after her near miss with street walking, and two full decades after arriving in Britain as a malnourished refugee.

Since then, she has found fame as a fine artist, stylistic lodestar, documentary filmmaker, video director, and—most famously—as a musical pioneer. Her 2005 album, *Arular*—a tangy mix of dancehall, crunk, funk, carioca, and pop—threw her onto style press' covers and into the cooler playlists the world over.

This afternoon, she's promoting her new album, *Kala*. Her mouth is tricked-out in tricolor lipstick, dark purple on the side, neon pink in the center. She eats half a Greek salad as we talk, at the end of a packed schedule, on a warm Friday evening—it's her first meal since breakfast.

Dressed in a pair of Reebok Hi-tops and an African liberation T-shirt, M.I.A. wears a Karen Walker ring, bearing, rather appropriately, the New Zealand designer's distinctive "runaway" logo: the silhouette of a tramping girl, all her possessions tied in a napkin on a stick, swung over her shoulder.

Born to Tamil parents in the suburbs of Greater London on July 17, 1977, M.I.A.'s family returned to their native Sri Lanka when she was an infant, just as relations between her people and the country's majority ethnic group, the Sinhalese, began to descend into full-blown war. Her father, Arul, abandoned his engineering career to lead a group of Tamil militants. M.I.A.'s mother, Kala, was left to raise three children, as they first sought refuge in India, then England. M.I.A. arrived back in the London suburbs in the mid eighties, with only five words of English in her vocabulary: apple, mango, elephant, and Michael Jackson.

"Mitcham [M.I.A.'s south London suburb] in the late eighties wasn't pretty," she says, "I had no idea what punk was. There were people walking around with green spiky hair, but you couldn't tell nice punks from nasty punks."



OVERALLS BY **JEREMY LOVES KSUBI**, SHIRT, JEWELRY & TIGHTS ARE STYLIST'S OWN.

Although she's now a huge Sex Pistols fan, the young M.I.A. found it hard to admire the mohawked sad sacks who spat at the Asian families in her housing project. Home life offered little comfort, as M.I.A.'s artistic temperament didn't click with her community's conservatism.

"There's no template for a Sri Lankan to be creative," she says, "Everyone was like, 'Okay, what are you doing? We always knew you were weird. Now you say you are singing?' My mum has always said, 'Well, you can take that job at the bank.'"

Arular, her debut, was dedicated to her absent dad, Arul, and drew heavily on the man's militant cachet. This new album, *Kala*, is named after her mother, and though many of the tracks are equally politicized, it's a more contemplative album. Recorded on four different continents, *Kala*'s highlights include a few lines of Aboriginal rap over Aussie-style didgeridoo beats, in "Mango Pickle Down River", and M.I.A. reciting the words from The Pixies' song "Where Is My Mind" over the broiling beats of "20 Dollar". Much of the album's production work was done by British studio-head, Switch.

There are also contributions from Timbaland ("Come Around," which also appeared on Timbo's recent solo album), Baltimore's DJ Blaqstarr, and Diplo. *Kala* also includes a love song entitled "Jimmy"—something of a first for M.I.A. The track, one of her favorite tunes from childhood, is in fact a cover of the theme from the Indian movie *Disco Dancer.* Today, she's as happy to talk about relationships and soap operas as she is to drop references to the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) and gunfire.

M.I.A.'s mother, Mrs. Kala Arulpragasam, didn't go to college and got married in her early twenties. "If you're a Sri Lankan woman you get brought up to be the best wife you can possibly be," explains M.I.A., "home making, being able to be a good mother."

Arriving in Britain without a husband, Kala fell back on these skills, baking cakes for her neighbors and sewing medals for Royal pageants. In 1988, she even helped make an accessory for Michael Jackson, after the pop star took a liking to the Lord Mayor of London's chain of office, and commissioned one for himself.

"We were really proud," she says, jokingly, "my mum, one of the only two people in the whole of England who sews, [she] made something for Michael Jackson. Anything was possible!"

M.I.A. says that despite her mother's hopes for her daughter, it was her father's absence that made delinquency an easy option. "I needed my dad to tell me that studying was a good idea," she says, "my mum was too busy keeping us alive."

As a teenager, M.I.A. fell in with a wild clique of Bengali boys, who dubbed themselves The Brick Lane Massive, after the predominantly Asian district of East London, which their gang ran. "They were doing drugs, gambling, playing with Ouija boards," she laughs, "they were definitely more ghetto than the Indian kids. During the days they would get 'A' grades in Business Studies, then they would sit about on their estate and organize big fights."

The track, "XR2," is inspired by nights out with the Bengalis in London's burgeoning rave scene. It takes it's title from the Ford Fiesta XR2, a cheap, fast car, popular with teenage tearaways in Britain some fifteen years ago. "They had spoilers on the back and bass tubes," she says, describing the car's adornments, "musically, it was really cool."

The raves themselves were held in a diverse selection of venues: Victorian exhibition centers, airplane hangars, converted railway warehouses. M.I.A.'s crew followed DJs like the drum 'n' bass pioneer, Grooverider, or event promoters such as World Dance. Her club-going outfit at the time consisted of "really tight jeans, shades, Versace and Moschino," she says, "we'd also wear denim jackets with each other's faces painted on the back." Well, it was the nineties.

Though she was flunking school and mixing with fledgling career-criminals, M.I.A. looks back on these times fondly. "It was amazing—so fun." She only distanced herself from the Brick Lane Massive after a local youth worker—noticing that M.I.A. was coming into the neighborhood to socialize—told her where she might be headed. "He said, 'You're so f*cking stupid, you shouldn't be hanging out here,'" she remembers, "'Do you want to end up in a council flat with six babies and you in a yashmak? You know, you'll probably end up marrying one of these kids and converting to Islam.'"

Uncharacteristically, M.I.A. took heed, completed the British equivalent of high school, and spent a couple of months outside the country, with her cousin, in South Central LA.

"Ohmygod!" she says, "LA was way better. Instead of XR2s you had lowriders, and instead of machetes you had guns, and instead of Es you had crack and bud and crystal meth!"

At the time, Los Angeles was rivalling New York as hip-hop's hot spot. Dr Dre's *The Chronic* was still big, Snoop was huge, and Tupac was definitely "getting around." "There would be video shoots all the time and video shoots were parties," M.I.A. remembers. "We used to get scouted to appear in them."

Thin and dark skinned, but with long straight hair, M.I.A. made regular appearances in hip-hop videos at the time. She had taken a few film classes and was keen to learn more, so she often pestered directors between takes. "They would say, 'Girl, you need to get in front of the camera and shake your ass,'" she smiles.

M.I.A. recalls countless nights when bigshot rappers would make passes at her. "They'd say, 'Do you want to come back with me to the hotel?'" she explains, "I'd be like, 'Why do you think I would, just because I have a skirt on?' They'd reply, 'If *you* don't, ten other girls will.'" To prove this, the rappers would leave with a dozen groupies.

She fell in with the glamorous, nefarious clique. "It's an easy life," she remembers, "all you have to do is look good and sit around. This one guy bought me an engagement ring; there was an opportunity for me to be a video girl, the type of girl who gets her nails done every day. You'd have to go and see it to understand that it was bullshit. I knew I couldn't dumb myself down. A week into it I'd be like, 'f*ck, I need something to do!'"

So she returned to Britain, talked her way into one of London's best universities, and ingratiated herself into upper reaches of the Britpop scene. Maya met Blur's Damon Albarn and his then girlfriend, the former Elastica singer, Justine Frischmann, via British movie business contacts while she was completing her film major. She says of the couple, "He was cool, but SHE was cooler."

Ohmygod!

South Central LA was way better [than South London]. Instead of XR2s you had lowriders, and instead of machetes you had guns, and instead of E you had crack, bud, and crystal meth!



Though their relationship began with M.I.A. shooting videos and tour footage for Elastica, Frischmann also helped M.I.A.'s early music career, introducing her to fellow electro-rap queen, Peaches, and co-writing her first single, "Galang." From hereon in, M.I.A.'s story is common knowledge: a steady ascent, on the basis of glowing reviews, canny collaborations, and smart political slogans.

"I can't believe I've lived through so many different things" Maya marvels, midpoint in our interview. In contrast to her dizzying past, her sophomore effort marks a bump back to earth.

Kala, the album, began in 2006, when M.I.A. returned from touring with Gwen Stefani and spent a little time with her mother, back in London. They watched Indian soap operas. "My mum had just had cable television installed," M.I.A. explains, "There are three Tamil speaking channels. All the soaps are household dramas," she continues, "they're usually called something like 'Husbands'. It's very much to do with being a homemaker."

She outlines an average plot: "Mother-in-law finds out her son has had another baby with someone else, and his wife can't have children; meanwhile dad is running the government. The villains are making dodgy deals; a lot of women are villains too—they have weak women who cry all the time and strong women who say 'f*ck this shit.'"

Though she was initially struck by the show's theme music—"the music isn't an important part; I'm just weird"—this contrast between old-world womanliness and modern-day independence crops up repeatedly.

"In American culture, 'baby mama' is quite an ordinary, everyday word now; more than 'wife,'" she says, "for me that's very hard, to strike a balance between an independent baby mama and someone who comes from a different background, especially from an eastern part of the world, where it's much more conservative."

While looking for an apartment in Brooklyn a few months ago, M.I.A. met some young hip-hop hustlers, keen to sell her beats and offer industry wisdom. She found that the recurrent advice was this: 'Don't have children, don't fall in love.'

M.I.A.'s one-time collaborators, Three 6 Mafia even told her not to get pregnant and said love was like cancer. "I thought that was an unhappy state to be in," she remembers, "Then I was like, 'Okay, well how do I get around that?'" She felt there had to be an alternative. "That's the challenge of bringing something together in a culture that believes all of that. I felt I had to bring a new way of being, a new type of existence for girls."

She doesn't have a solid prototype to work with. Her parents fell in



SWEATSHIRT BY **TO-ORIST**, LEGGINGS BY **DAVID DAVID**, SHOES BY **DEREK LAM**.

love, had kids, and lived with the consequences. Asked if she thought her father, the freedom fighter, did the right thing she responds, "I didn't know too much about it at the time," she says, "You can't complain about him not being there as a dad. People liked him for what he was doing; they would come up to us in the street and say he was great." As an adult, her perspective of her father remains gracious. "Well, I think it's amazing that any human being can be that motivated and start something from scratch and have ideas to change things." She says admiringly, "That's good whether they're my dad or not."

That said, she doesn't think her father's decision to become a revolutionary was entirely fair to her mother. "That's the battle of being a man. He shouldn't have gotten married; he shouldn't have had kids if he knew that's what he wanted," Maya says, "My mum thought she was getting an engineer, and my dad was thinking 'I want to give up engineering and become a politician.' Women have their own battles..."

It seems that M.I.A.'s struggle is just beginning. Having rejected almost every stereotype of modern womanhood that exists—MTV beauty queen, Islamic trophy wife, good Asian girl, hooker, and careerist—she's still working out how to express herself.

"Are you dictated by your art, or are you ruled by who you are as a woman?" she asks, pausing before answering, "I don't know, I'm still trying to find out."

Some of M.I.A.'s dilemma lies in her having experienced so many different things, in so many places. "Coming out of Sri Lanka and being the first refugee who made it to America and got signed to Interscope; that's the journey I've made," she says, "I've got to make that make sense to me. I've got to know when to stop and just be content with not trying to be connected to Sri Lanka anymore. You have to move on and think about how you fit in now," she gathers her thoughts for a moment, "It's confusing for me."

If M.I.A. has any advice for plucky *Missbehave* readers keen to strike out on a career in the popular arts, it wouldn't be not to fall in love or get pregnant. "No, you have to fall in love," she says, adamantly, "Love is everything; it's the end of the line. I have always been determined not to fall on a social level, because it really is about survival."

Now, she's softened a little: "I think I've proved to my mum she's done alright. I've proved that with my work, but you can't sacrifice family, love, and all those human needs." If *Kala* proves anything, it's that M.I.A. is both a lover and a fighter and determined above all to be herself. Even if she might have to use just a little emotional blackmail now and again. ★


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OVERALLS BY **KSUBI**

Just the way it is

SOME THINGS THEY NEVER CHANGE



PHOTOS: **VINCENT SKELTIS** STYLE: **KRISTINA DECHTER**



THIS PAGE: JEANS & SWEATER FROM **URBAN OUTFITTERS,** JACKET BY **CLAW MONEY,** PUMPS BY **DAVIS BY RUTHIE DAVIS,** TIGHTS BY **HUE,** WAYFARERS BY **RAY-BAN,** NECKLACE IS MODEL'S OWN.

OPPOSITE PAGE: JUMPSUIT BY **REPLAY,** TANK BY **UNIQLO,** BOOTS BY **SISLEY,** SUNGLASSES BY **SELIMA OPTIQUE,** EARRINGS ARE MODEL'S OWN, FANNY PACK IS STYLIST'S OWN.



(L TO R) HEART SWEATER BY **SONIA BY SONIA RYKIEL,** JACKET BY **SONIA RYKIEL**, SUNGLASSES BY **CLAW MONEY**, STRIPED SWEATER BY **UNITED COLORS OF BENETTON,** GLASSES BY **MIU MIU,** JEANS ARE MODELS' OWN.



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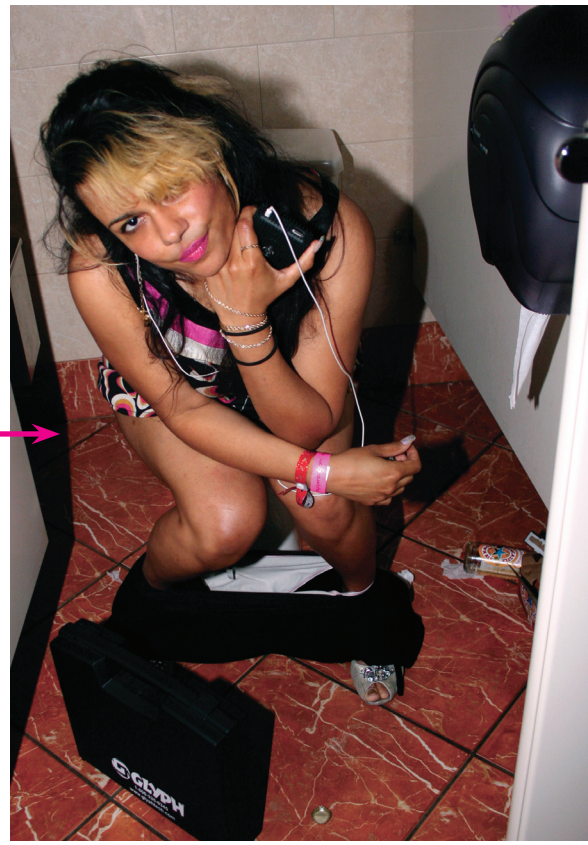
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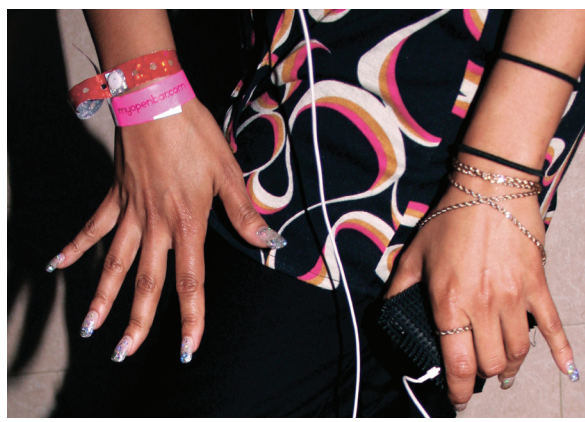
WORDS: Lois Sakany PHOTOS: Emily Rawlings

New York City is famous for its flavorful female. The funnest ones are those fabulous felines from far-flung corners who land on their feet in the Triborough. Those who lament the death of the nightclub scene clearly have never hung with this crew. Wherever they go, they bring the bawdy with them. And they ain't leaving 'til six in the mornin'!



Illvia

Age: I don't answer that question. **When did you move to New York City?** Eight years ago **What do you do for a living?** Musician/artist **What was your first job here?** Musician **Who is your fashion idol or fave designer?** I can't think of anyone **What kind of music are you listening to lately?** Metal-influenced electronic, and myself **Favorite place to shop?** Sugar Headquarters **What pair of shoes brings you the most happiness?** Jewel-encrusted peek-a-boo flats **What's your dating status?** Lady in waiting **What's your most-used gadget?** Glyph hard drive **What fashion faux pas makes you cringe?** Dressing like you give a f*ck **Describe the biggest asshole you ever had the misfortune of dating?** I've never dated an asshole. I'm probably the biggest asshole.





Reni Laine

Age: 19 **When did you move to New York City?** As soon as I turned 18 **What do you do for a living?** Artist/singer **What was your first job here?** A receptionist at a real estate company **Who is your fashion idol or fave designer?** Apollo Braun **What kind of music are you listening to lately?** Appalachian techno **Favorite place to shop?** Flea markets **What pair of shoes brings you the most happiness?** White Doc Marten's **What's your dating status?** Single **What's your most-used gadget?** Garage Band on MacBook **What fashion faux pas makes you cringe?** Trying to fit in and also jeans with high heels **Describe the biggest asshole you ever had the misfortune of dating?** I've only dated three people and they weren't so bad.



Maggie Horn

Age: 29 **When did you move to New York City?** 2002 **What do you do for a living?** DJ **What was your first job here?** Waitress **Who is your fashion idol or fave designer?** Bijules NYC **What kind of music are you listening to lately?** Party music **Favorite place to shop?** Girl Props and Rainbow **What pair of shoes brings you the most happiness?** Jordans with neon and orange soles **What's your dating status?** Always dating **What's your most-used gadget?** BlackBerry **What fashion faux pas makes you cringe?** Not believing in what you're wearing **Describe the biggest asshole you ever had the misfortune of dating?** He still owes me rent.





Sage Stuto

Age: 23 **When did you move to New York City?** When I was 18 **What do you do for a living?** Fashion designer **What was your first job here?** Food service at a skating rink **Who is your fashion idol or fave designer?** Patricia Field: she's a lesbian, she's a designer, she has a boutique, she does it all. **What kind of music are you listening to lately?** Hip-hop electronic **Favorite place to shop?** Daffy's **What pair of shoes brings you the most happiness?** I have a shoe fetish, and I love my thigh-high, leather boots by Juicy Couture. **What's your dating status?** Single lesbian **What's your most-used gadget?** Androgynous girls **What fashion faux pas makes you cringe?** Those Israeli scarves and American Apparel in general **Describe the biggest asshole you ever had the misfortune of dating?** We had a dog together and I haven't seen my dog in a year.





Mallory Blair

Age: 18 **When did you move to New York City?** I was born on the Upper East Side **What do you do for a living?** Full-time student at NYU **What was your first job here?** Oxy Cottontail's personal assistant **Who is your fashion idol or fave designer?** Lily Allen **What kind of music are you listening to lately?** A whole lot of top 40 music, just a little bit of Baltimore Club, and hip-hop is my life. **Favorite place to shop?** Screaming Mimi's **What pair of shoes brings you the most happiness?** Teal and silver mid Adidas Apollos **What's your dating status?** Single **What's your most-used gadget?** My Compaq Presario 1040 **What fashion faux pas makes you cringe?** Gauchos and boots **Describe the biggest asshole you ever had the misfortune of dating?** Honestly, I can't. I'm still really good friends with all my exes.







Isis

Age: 22 **When did you move to New York City?** I live in Toronto **What do you do for a living?** Musician/member of Thunder Heist **What was your first job there?** Marketing director for a travel agency **Who is your fashion idol or fave designer?** Kelis and Naomi Campbell **What kind of music are you listening to lately?** Old rock, electro and Broken Social Scene **Favorite place to shop?** Adrift, a skate shop in Toronto **What pair of shoes brings you the most happiness?** Hi Top Vans **What's your dating status?** Single but complicated. I'm independent—I love men, but I also love my one-bedroom apartment. **What's your most-used gadget?** My BlackBerry **What fashion faux pas makes you cringe?** Allover prints and ascots **Describe the biggest asshole you ever had the misfortune of dating?** I had $10,000 in the bank and it was reduced to $100 by a guy who was obsessed with his Xbox.

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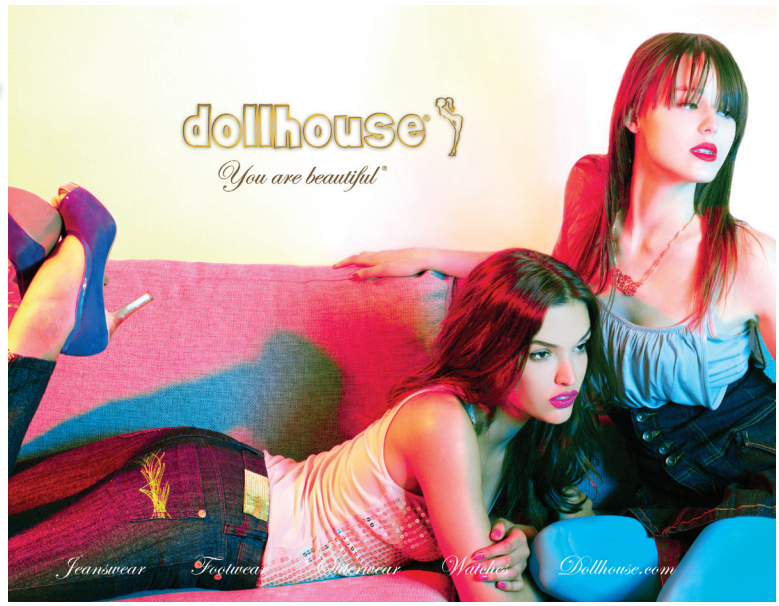
SWEET VIBES JEANS



Sweet Vibes Jeans is stuntin' with a sweet gear giveaway! Nab a hoodie, jeans, notebook, shirt, and CD signed by super hot and sassy Latin songstress Paula DeAnda! Sweet Vibes is an offshoot of the streetwear brand Vibes Gold Label and they engineer denim for curvy girls. Which is rad since most of us do have frickin' curves, despite what some other brands would have us believe. Hit up sweetvibesjeans.com to enter.

DOLLHOUSE "YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL" CONTEST

The fly clothing brand Dollhouse totally thinks you're hot. Seriously. They won't stop talking about it. And the best part is, they think you're beautiful not just 'cause of your looks (which are awesome) but because you're unique. Go to their web site www.dollhouse.com and let them know why you think you're beautiful—whether it's your bananas style, your enviable mastery of grammar, your philanthropic enterprises, or because you play the harpsichord like it's nothing. Once on their site, submit pics and words about you doin' your thang thang, and they might just post it! The most beautifullest will win Dollhouse gear. And also our respect.









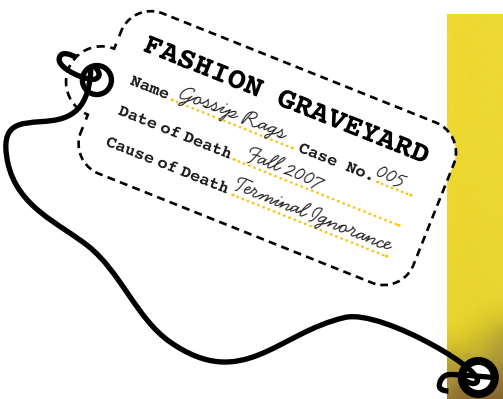
JUSTSWEET BEATS CONTEST

So, you wanna be a pop star? Course you do! Well, here's your big break! Justsweet, the spectacular fashion purveyor, is sending one lucky winner to Dubstop (dubstop.com)—NYC's first DJ, VJ, and Electronic Music Production Academy! At Dubstop, you'll be able to produce your very own original song with help from award-winning producer Jim Bonnefond.

As if that ain't enough to get your melon swellin', your new incredible song will be played on *Missbehave* Radio. Plus, you'll get to carouse around town with famous party promoters Justine D. and Oxy Cottontail. Your frienemies will die of envy. To enter you must submit a CD with 1-2 original songs (up to 4 minutes in length), a picture, and your age to: justsweet beats contest c/o Missbehave Magazine 261 Vandervoort Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11211. All this without Simon "smedium shirt" Cowell's soul-crushing criticism. This is for U.S. residents only, transportation and accommodations will be provided. CDs will not be returned. Check out Missbehavemag.com or MySpace.com/justsweetbeats for justsweet beats deets!

BLOID RAGE





You know what's tacky? Tabloids are tacky. They just are. As an accessory, they're like really really teeny designer backpacks, you know, the ones that Eastern European call girls are partial to. Or, like, pashminas. But only if the pashmina had maribou feather pom-poms and was made of chenille. Oh Jesus, chenille...man, I think vomit just came out of my eyes. If you feel sheepish for toting around a tabloid, it's because you should. Why billboard the fact that you "read" balderdash that a retard with the mental acuity of a toadstool would relish? And Christ, if we have to endure anymore chattering on that second-string bloodsport that Hollywood gossip rags chronicle, we will go ballistic. And it's not gonna be pretty since we're munitions experts. Just need a couple of clean shots...

It's just gotten to the point where the scope of the staple-stitched monstrosities is getting depressing. Where once the starlets therein were nubile and pretty, under the scrutiny of the stalkerazzi these twentysomethings look battle worn. Watching the gallivanting of gak-gorging gargoyles is no longer beguiling. It's bum fights. They're destroying each other like anorexic gladiators, and even though the movements are really slow 'cause they're malnourished and wearing heavy jewelry, it's all for tabloid readers' amusement. It's barbaric to hold the playbill that chronicles all of this. Britney's mama's haggard mug does not match your purse, my dear.

Why be seen with one of these paltry programs that try to convince you that Pete Wentz, Joel Madden, and Keith Urban are pertinent? Why not try a change of pace. A real magazine. Perfect-bound. With pictures you'd want to put on your wall and polysyllabic words you hold dear to your heart. Sorta like this one. Or maybe try something else. It's called a book. They're magnificent and worthwhile. And not just 'cause you can X-Acto out the pages and make a cute little recess to stash your pills in.



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